

1982

# Paul Shyre's Contribution to the Professional Performance of Non-Dramatic Literature 1954-1981: an Historical Survey (New York City).

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PAUL SHYRE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE  
OF NON-DRAMATIC LITERATURE 1954-1981: AN HISTORICAL SURVEY

*The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col.*    PH.D. 1982

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PAUL SHYRE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROFESSIONAL  
PERFORMANCE OF NON-DRAMATIC LITERATURE  
1954-1981: AN HISTORICAL SURVEY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Speech Communication

by

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## ABSTRACT

This study documents, describes, examines, and orders Paul Shyre's contribution to the field of oral performance of literature. The study sets as parameters the professional presentation of non-dramatic literature, that is, literature not written for dramatic performance.

Shyre's contribution includes fourteen adaptations of this type. During the period from 1954-1966 Shyre adapted the works of Edgar Allen Poe into a performance entitled the Theatre of Mr. Poe, followed by two adaptations based on the autobiographical novels of Sean O'Casey, I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway. After adaptations of compiled scripts, I Hear America Singing and U.S.A., a collaboration with John Dos Passos, Shyre returned to a third adaptation from the works of O'Casey, Drums Under the Windows. Yeats and Company and A Whitman Portrait were adaptations Shyre was commissioned to do at the close of this period. All of the early presentations fall into the class of things we often call "group performances" of non-dramatic literature.

The second period from 1967-1981 begins with Shyre's most successful one-person show, Will Rogers' U.S.A., followed by a compiled script entitled The President is Dead, based on the Lincoln assassination.



Another compiled script, New York, New York, was taken from poetry, prose, and musical lyrics based on the theme of New York City. the next two adaptations, Paris Was Yesterday and An Unpleasant Evening with H. L. Mencken, were one-person shows adapted from writings of journalists Janet Flanner and H. L. Mencken, respectively. Ah, Men, a compiled script based on writings of numerous men, closes out this period. These fourteen adaptations comprise the largest individual contribution to the professional performance of non-dramatic literature during the period 1966-1981.

## INTRODUCTION

The professional theatre of New York City has fostered a broad variety of performance styles and source materials for use in dramatic presentation from the traditional Broadway musical, e.g., Man of La Mancha, to dramatic classics written by Ibsen, Chekhov, Shakespeare and others; from the relatively simple staging of a one-person show to the massive staging required for operas like Aida. Furthermore, New York theatre continues to be a place where American theatrical innovation is born and developed. Although many of these innovations or experiments may not be considered "mainstream" Broadway theatre, they remain a vital part of its evolution and history. One such special type of theatre which has generated increased interest from those in the field of oral interpretation is the professional production of non-dramatic literary materials. This special type of theatrical presentation involves the performance of literature that was not originally intended for dramatic production. These performances have been called many things from "readers theatre" and "concert readings," referring to the group performances, to "monodrama" and "one-man show," speaking of the solo performances. Examples of solo performances of this kind would include such professional

productions as Mark Twain Tonight and Give 'em Hell, Harry. Spoon River Anthology and John Brown's Body are good illustrations of this type of group performance. The professional performance of non-dramatic literature has continued to increase since the early 1950's. The person singularly most responsible for professional performances of this type has been Mr. Paul Shyre.

At least fourteen of his adaptations have been professionally produced between 1954 and 1981. I Knock at the Door, Pictures in the Hallway, and Drums Under the Windows were adapted from the first three autobiographical novels of the Irish author-playwright, Sean O'Casey. The Theatre of Mr. Poe was adapted from selected poetry and prose written by Edgar Allen Poe. John Dos Passos' trilogy U.S.A., which includes The 42nd Parallel, Nineteen, and The Big Money, became a full length production. Janet Flanner's journalistic writings provided material for Paris Was Yesterday and the works of H. L. Mencken constituted the text for An Unpleasant Evening with H. L. Mencken (later retitled Blasts and Bravos: An Evening with H. L. Mencken). I Hear America Singing was adapted, in part, from a television script by Joe Wershba, which in turn included cuttings from the works of Stephen Vincent Benet and others. The President is Dead was taken, in great measure, from courtroom transcripts after the Lincoln assassination. Shyre adapted the works of Walt Whitman into a script called A Whitman

Portrait and the words and writings of the famous cowboy entertainer-philosopher Will Rogers furnished the text of Will Rogers' U.S.A. New York, New York, a compiled script, was taken from poetry, prose, street cries, music, etc. all related to a theme on New York City.<sup>1</sup> The literary works of Irish writer William Butler Yeats were adapted into Yeats and Company. And lastly, Ah, Men was a compiled script taken from "the works of prominent male authors and writers and thinkers from the past right up to the present."<sup>2</sup>

Several of Shyre's productions, most notably Will Rogers' U.S.A., the U.S.A. production he had done with John Dos Passos, and the first two O'Casey adaptations, I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway, toured both professional and college theaters from coast to coast. In many such instances Shyre used a combination of student and professional performers. More than one of the later adaptations, A Whitman Portrait, New York, New York, Yeats and Company, etc. were done at the request of schools, literary groups and other individuals who obviously had become aware of Shyre through his past successes with work of this type. The early adaptations, then, really made possible much of the later work.

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<sup>1</sup>Statement by Paul Shyre, in recorded personal interview, New York City, New York, August 9, 1982, p. 31. Original transcription held by author.

<sup>2</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 9.

Shyre's productions of non-dramatic materials have also found an audience outside the United States, particularly on the London stage. At least three of Shyre's productions, A Whitman Portrait, I Knock at the Door, and Pictures in the Hallway, were presented to London audiences, and he says, "there is talk--I've been approached about doing a production of U.S.A. there by an American-Canadian company who wants to do it in London next season [1983]."<sup>3</sup> Further, many of Shyre's adaptations were revived in subsequent New York seasons, while others have enjoyed repeated success in revivals in major cities such as Washington D.C. and Los Angeles.

At times, he was both a director and a performer in the same production. The 1974 production of Pictures in the Hallway at Loretto Heights College in Denver, Colorado was an example of this approach. Shyre and Eugenia Rawls were the two professionals in the cast, the remaining five members of the cast being students. However, Shyre does not think that performing and directing at the same time is the ideal situation. "But personally I don't think a director should perform in something he is directing unless he's done the piece before and is so familiar with it that it's merely a question of rehashing and redoing what he had already accomplished."<sup>4</sup> He

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<sup>3</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 42.

further pointed out the major problem with this is the idea that the actor-director is split, "I admire the actor who can direct his own play because you're splitting up your thoughts and you have to keep jumping between the actor, who's directing, and the director, who's acting, and I don't think it's fair one to the other."<sup>5</sup>

While Shyre's work has been mentioned in textbooks on readers' theatre and group performance of literature, no study has attempted the collection and documentation of this substantial contribution to the field of interpretation and particularly to those interested in its recent history. Paul Shyre has consistently contributed as a performer, director, adapter, and producer to the professional production of non-dramatic literature and his contribution has found professional popularity and success. He is a leading figure, despite his modest assertion in a 1982 interview that he considered his greatest accomplishment to be survival. He further qualified this statement saying, "I think survival is an accomplishment--being able to survive in this business and go through your life doing it. That in itself is an accomplishment."<sup>6</sup> The professional and popular success of his adaptations has contributed to the thing he chooses to call his "survival."

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<sup>5</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 7.

The purpose of this paper is the documentation, description, ordering, and examination of Shyre's contribution to the production of non-dramatic literature from 1953 through 1981. The documentation of a contribution as extensive as Shyre's will always be of value in that it broadens the pool of knowledge and scholarship within the area of history. Further, this study offers a solid foundation for in-depth research into this period of interpretation history. This particular study has the advantage of dealing with a figure who is still alive and continues to gain recognition for his work in the area of professional performance of non-dramatic literature, e.g., Paris Was Yesterday, 1980 and Ah, Men, 1981.

However, some of Shyre's adaptations are outside the scope of the present study because they do not fit into the class of things defined here as "non-dramatic literature." This definition would include the following major points: (1) a production of non-dramatic literature is taken from materials not originally intended for dramatic production, as with a play, (2) a production of this type attempts to retain the genre and form of the original materials in the adaptation, and lastly, (3) in compiled scripts, that is, a script made of more than one text, the adapter would strive for a sense of wholeness through transition and progression to conclusion. This definition would exclude plays by Shyre like The Child Buyer based on the novel by John Hershey and The Drinking

Party, a play based loosely on selected dialogues of the Greek philosopher Plato. Both of these adaptations fall outside the parameters of this study because they fail to meet the basic principles for adaptations of non-dramatic materials.

In addition to the readily available books, articles and newspapers, materials for this study include primary source materials from the collected papers of Paul Shyre, Special Collections, Boston University, Mugar Library. Additional primary information comes from a 1982 transcribed interview with Shyre, himself. James Whitmore, who played in Shyre's popular one-man show, Will Rogers' U.S.A., also provided material from several interviews he gave to different reporters while working with Shyre. The data are organized chronologically, each production ordered according to the date of its initial performance. Further, the subsequent performances of the production will follow before the discussion of the next adaptation. Chapter one is a discussion of the early professional productions of non-dramatic literature from 1954 to 1966, including The Theatre of Mr. Poe, 1954; I Knock at the Door, 1956; Pictures in the Hallway, 1956; I Hear America Singing, 1957; U.S.A., 1959; Drums Under the Windows, 1961; Yeats and Company, 1965; and A Whitman Portrait, 1965. Each of the productions is analyzed, as much as is possible, in the following manner: (1) time and place of premiere performance, (2) a description of



the scripting, whenever the script is available, (3) staging, (4) subsequent tours and revivals, and (5) the critical response to each of the productions. Chapter two covers the productions presented from 1967 to 1981, including Will Rogers' U.S.A., 1970; The President is Dead, 1971; An Unpleasant Evening With H. L. Mencken, 1972; Paris Was Yesterday, 1978; and Ah, Men, 1981. Chapter three is a summary and conclusion. An appendix includes chronologies of the work, casts lists, the Shyre interview, an inventory of the Shyre Collection held by the Boston University Mugar Library, pictures, and other data as they prove relevant to the study.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: PAUL SHYRE

Paul Shyre was born in New York City, March 8, 1926. He graduated from high school in Miami, Florida, in 1945 and attended the University of Florida in 1945 and 1946. It was while attending the University of Florida that Shyre, who entered school to embark on a career in journalism, became interested in theatre.

I think I was a sophomore--I'm not sure--they were casting a production of The Little Foxes and I managed to get the role of the husband, and after that show opened the acting bug and the theatre bug bit me and I eventually left the university and enrolled at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York from which I graduated two years later.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 6.

The 1982 interview with Shyre indicated that any artistic leanings he might have had come from his mother's side of the family. "They were not in the theatre, per se. They were more in the vaudeville, night club type of entertainment."<sup>8</sup> Shyre's mother was one of the "ladies of the chorus" in a Broadway musical titled Hello, Alexander which played the Majestic Theatre and "starred a very popular team at the time known as McIntyre and Heath."<sup>9</sup> Shyre also recounts, with some degree of humor, his uncles, Jo Jo and Moe Lee, one of whom played in Diamond Lil with Mae West and did night club dates all over the United States. This uncle, Jo Jo Lee, was the original barker at the "six day bike races."<sup>10</sup> Another uncle, Moe Lee, was a member of a three man comedy team who were "three gentlemen who called themselves the very strange title of "The Three Loose Screws." Shyre adds, "so you can imagine what type of humor was involved. . . ."<sup>11</sup> Shyre also indicated he had an aunt, Edna Lee, who played "The Blue Hour Club" in Atlantic City, billed as "The Queen of the Blues Singers."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 3.

I seem to be the only one in that side of my family who went on to what you might call the "theatre" as against the type of things they did. On my father's side of the family, there were no theatrical or artistic leanings that I could learn of. My father was born in New Orleans and my grandparents lived there all their lives, and they were dyed-in-the-wool Southern Louisiana New Orleans people.<sup>13</sup>

Shyre continued to talk of his family relationships and concluded that the only influence they might have had on his career was that they were also in what could be broadly termed "show business but it was a type of show business which was completely alien to me, particularly with my uncles who used a very low comedic humor, which one rarely finds today except in, you know, some of the Las Vegas acts."<sup>14</sup>

In addition to his study at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts with fellow students such as Anne Bancroft, Jason Robards, Jr., and Colleen Dewhurst,<sup>15</sup> Shyre also studied acting with Harold Clurman, well-known New York director-critic, from 1953-1955.<sup>16</sup> The "survival" he mentioned in the 1982 interview also included early times filled with hand-to-mouth jobs and hardship. In

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<sup>13</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>Carol Eisenberg, "A Star But Still Striving," Ithaca Journal, February 25, 1980, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup>Walter Rigdon, ed., The Biographical Encyclopedia and Who's Who of America (New York: James H. Heineman, Inc., 1966), p. 824.

a 1980 interview with the Ithaca Journal Shyre freely admitted that his success story was not "happily ever after"<sup>17</sup> but involved extra after school jobs "selling shoes, playing Santa for Lord and Taylor Department Store, checking hats for Lindy's Restaurant with then-starving actress Geraldine Page."<sup>18</sup>

Although this study will deal extensively with Shyre's contribution to the professional performance of non-dramatic literature, it should be noted that Shyre is an unusual personality in that his theatrical talent includes acting, directing, producing, adapting, writing and more. In other words, he is a total theatrical personality with success in many areas, one of the major ones being professional performance of non-dramatic materials. Shyre directed and produced a production of Eugene O'Neill's Diff'rent at the Mermaid Theatre in 1961.<sup>19</sup> In 1962 he became artistic director for the Fred Miller Theatre in Milwaukee where he opened the season directing O'Neill's Beyond the Horizon.<sup>20</sup> That season he also directed his own adaptation of John Dos

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<sup>17</sup>Eisenberg, "A Star," p. 4.

<sup>18</sup>Eisenberg, "A Star," p. 4.

<sup>19</sup>Henry Hewes, ed., The Best Plays of 1961-1962 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1962), pp. 309-310.

<sup>20</sup>Information from the Paul Shyre Collection, Mugar Memorial Library, Boston University, Boston, Inventory of collection along with addenda for 1967, 1968, 1971, 1978, and 1980 included in appendixes.

Passos' U.S.A., Pirandello's As You Desire Me, and the American premiere of T. S. Eliot's The Elder Statesman.<sup>21</sup> John Houseman commissioned Shyre to adapt the John Hersey novel, The Child Buyer, and in the spring of 1962 Shyre directed this adaptation for the Theatre Group at U.C.L.A. In 1964 Shyre directed Alan Alda, later of M.A.S.H. fame, at the Cort Theatre in a play titled Fair Game for Lovers, which closed after only eight performances.<sup>22</sup>

The chronology continues:

Actor, New York City debut, <u>Buy Me Blue Ribbons</u> .....	1951
	New York <sup>23</sup>
Director, Millstream Players.....	1951-1953
	Sea Girt, NJ <sup>24</sup>
Director, Arena Theatre.....	1953
	Rochester <sup>25</sup>
Director, <u>The Queen and the Rebels</u> by Ugo Betti.....	1965
	New York <sup>26</sup>
Director, <u>Pygmalion</u> by G. B. Shaw.....	1972
	New York <sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Henry Hewes, ed., The Best Plays of 1962-1963 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1963), p. 53.

<sup>22</sup>Henry Hewes, ed., The Best Plays of 1963-1964 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1964), p. 324.

<sup>23</sup>Information from Press Book for The Theatre of Mr. Poe (printed and released, Council Bluffs: Pryor-Menz Concert Service, Summer, 1954).

<sup>24</sup>Press Book, Theatre of Mr. Poe.

<sup>25</sup>Press Book, Theatre of Mr. Poe.

<sup>26</sup>Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., ed., The Best Plays of 1964-1965 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1965), p. 355.

<sup>27</sup>Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., ed., The Best Plays of 1972-1973 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1973), p. 405.

Director, <u>Juno and Paycock</u> by Sean O'Casey.....	1973
	Hartford <sup>28</sup>
Actor, <u>Absurd Person Singular</u> .....	1974
by Alan Ayckbourn	New York <sup>29</sup>
Director, <u>The Morgan Yard</u> .....	1974
by Kevin O'Morrison	Dublin <sup>30</sup>
Actor, <u>Saint Joan</u> by G. B. Shaw.....	1977
	New York <sup>31</sup>
Artist in Residence, Cornell University.....	1980
	Ithaca <sup>32</sup>

This is only a partial listing, but it does show some of Shyre's versatility. In his interview he did not elaborate on other work experience except to say, "Well, I have taught or lectured or directed at quite a few [schools]--U.C.L.A., Swarthmore, Boston University--I can go on and on."<sup>33</sup> He continued talking about his most recent teaching experience.

Last year, or about a year and a half ago, I was visiting professor in the theatre department at Cornell University, where I spent a long semester. I taught three courses, including a graduate course, in theatre and acting and I also directed a student production of Moliere's Misanthrope.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>John Willis, ed., Theatre World (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1974), p. 209.

<sup>29</sup>Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., ed., The Best Plays of 1975-1976 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1976), p. 411.

<sup>30</sup>Kay Kent, "All-American: Kay Kent Talks to Kevin O'Morrison and Paul Shyre," The Irish Times [Dublin], October 2, 1974, n.p.

<sup>31</sup>Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., ed., The Best Plays of 1977-1978 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1978), pp. 351-352.

<sup>32</sup>Eisenberg, "A Star," p. 4.

<sup>33</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 6.

The 1954 press releases for The Theatre of Mr. Poe indicated some of Shyre's earliest work experience: direction of the New York University Dramatic Society, more than twenty television shows, numerous Broadway appearances after his 1951 debut in "Buy Me Blue Ribbons," and stock work in Westport, Connecticut, Miami, Florida, and Gatlinburg, Tennessee."<sup>35</sup>

Shyre has also received several awards, some of them for his work with productions pertinent to this study, for the professional performance of non-dramatic materials. In 1957 he received a special Village Voice Off-Broadway (Obie) Award for U.S.A., the adaptation he and Dos Passos made of the novel by the latter. The following year he received the New York Vernon Rice Drama Desk, which he says, "was just a general award they gave out every year for the work one did."<sup>36</sup> That same year, 1958, Shyre also got the Brandeis University Creative Arts Award for being the newcomer that "they feel shows promise."<sup>37</sup> He was also nominated for an Antoinette Perry (Tony) award for his adaptations of the O'Casey autobiographies.<sup>38</sup> As Shyre has indicated, his adaptations and productions of non-dramatic materials have been recognized and given awards.

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<sup>35</sup>Press Book, Theatre of Mr. Poe.

<sup>36</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 5.

In his 1982 interview Shyre made a statement especially important to this study, explaining how he became interested in this type of "transcription," as he called it, of literary materials.

As to my interest in transcribing literary material into professional theatre, I have always felt that there are several literary writers who, perhaps without knowing it, their works lend themselves to the dramatic or the theatrical. Some examples of this could be John Dos Passos, the autobiographies of Sean O'Casey, most of the poetry of Walt Whitman, some of Hemingway, etc., whereas there are many other great writers whose works do not lend themselves towards the stage. An example would be if one tried to adapt the prose writing of Henry James to the stage it would probably be very dull listening for the audience, although it might read beautifully. With Henry James, the success of many of his adaptations have been for the stage and screen, where the writer took the plot of the story and the basic outline and used much of his own dialogue to carry it through, but there's never been any kind of reading, so to speak, adaptation of Henry James that has succeeded.<sup>39</sup>

The above statement is important because it shows that Shyre has a good understanding of the difference between a play based on the works of Henry James and a reading or performance of the works of that same author. It should also be noted that Shyre has clearly indicated, although some might disagree, that many fine literary works would not, in his estimation, be professionally successful. Shyre concluded, however, "there is a great deal of literary material about, and although the author

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<sup>39</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 1.



may have never intended it to be transformed into another medium, this material lends itself for the theatre."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 2.

## Chapter 1

### EARLY PRODUCTIONS: 1954-1966

Chapter one of this study will cover the first eight adaptations of non-dramatic literature, which occurred during the period from 1954-1966, productions Paul Shyre adapted, performed in, and/or directed. The 1954 production of The Theatre of Mr. Poe was based on the poetry and prose of Edgar Allen Poe. This production was followed by adaptations of two of the six autobiographical novels of Sean O'Casey, I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway. Later, after the adaptation of I Hear America Singing and the collaboration with John Dos Passos on the adaptation of U.S.A., Shyre returned to the O'Casey novels and adapted Drums Under the Windows. The last two adaptations from this period, Yeats and Company and A Whitman Portrait, were composed of the works of William Butler Yeats and Walt Whitman respectively. All of these shows fit the basic definition of this study for group performances on non-dramatic literature professionally performed. Yeats and Company did include two one-act plays but consisted primarily of non-dramatic materials compiled as a unified whole.

Brent Bouldin, in his 1976 M.A. thesis entitled Ten Productions of Non-Dramatic Literature in the Broadway

and Off-Broadway Theatre in 1974, has indicated a performance of Shyre and Dos Passos' adaptation of U.S.A. as early as 1953 in Westport, Connecticut. The documentation of this performance has been a problem. Although the production might have been done that early, Bouldin has not indicated the source of his information on the subject and Shyre himself in the 1982 interview has said that the memory of many of these events has faded. In answer to a question about when and where the different productions toured, Shyre said, "That is very difficult for me to answer. . . . I can't remember all the different productions of the readings. Sorry about that!"<sup>1</sup> Shyre further stated that the best source of documentation would be the Boston Library or "perhaps the Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center or the main branch of the New York City Library. . . ." <sup>2</sup> From the information gathered at the Boston Library, from the Shyre interview, and from Bouldin's thesis it is not possible to verify this 1953 Westport production of U.S.A.; therefore, the first production to be documented in this study is Shyre's adaptation taken from the works of Edgar Allen Poe entitled The Theatre of Mr. Poe.

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<sup>1</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 17.

The Theatre of Mr. Poe, Summer: 1954

No copy of the script for this performance was available, but each program collected followed the same format and clearly indicated the Poe works that were included. However, they do not show how the materials were "cut" or "adapted" in other ways for the performance. The programs have shown a first act as follows:

1. The Cask of Amontillado....a tale of Revenge
2. Annabel Lee.....a poem of Mourning
3. The System of Dr. Tarr  
and Professor Fether.....a tale of Humour

After an intermission, scheduled for ten minutes in most of the programs, a second act contained the following:

1. The Raven.....a poem of Fantasy
2. The Purloined Letter...a tale of Ratiocination
3. The Tell-Tale Heart....a tale of Horror<sup>3</sup>

Three actors joined "forces to complete the trio who draw from their varied and widespread careers to dramatize, with action, a series of Poe's short stories."<sup>4</sup> Although press release number three speaks only of Poe's short stories, the programs clearly indicate the performances of poetry as well. Further, the press releases offer evidence that indicate the use of additional "narration interspersed by one of the actors,

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<sup>3</sup>Information from printed program for The Theatre of Mr. Poe, Peru State Teachers College engagement, College Auditorium, June 17, 1954.

<sup>4</sup>Press Book, Theatre of Mr. Poe, Council Bluffs, 1954.

and not always the same one. . . ." <sup>5</sup> which was intended to produce, in the words of the press release, "continuity." <sup>6</sup> Shyre further indicated that some of the parts, such as The Raven, were performed as solo pieces.

The Theatre of Mr. Poe toured midwestern colleges during the summer of 1954. Because the production was done in the early fifties, Shyre indicated he did not remember exactly how the production was staged. "This is very difficult for me to answer because that was done way back in 1953 or 1954, which is a long time for me to remember." <sup>7</sup> However, he did recall that the staging was very simple "with just a few tables and chairs." <sup>8</sup> Further, he said to the best of his knowledge this production toured only once, in the summer of 1954. "As to there being a script for this production, I really haven't the vaguest idea because it's really almost thirty years ago. . . ." <sup>9</sup>

The earliest dated program found documented a performance at Kansas State Teachers College, Pittsburg, Kansas. The performance was presented in the Carney Hall

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<sup>5</sup>Press Book, Theatre of Mr. Poe, Council Bluffs, 1954.

<sup>6</sup>Press Book, Theatre of Mr. Poe, Council Bluffs, 1954.

<sup>7</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 11.

Auditorium on June 14, 1954.<sup>10</sup> Other programs from the Shyre collection documented performances at Central Missouri State College<sup>11</sup> on the fifteenth of June and the University of Nebraska on the sixteenth of that same month.<sup>12</sup> Although daily program records were incomplete, the ones available suggest that the three-man group performed each day on a new campus.<sup>13</sup>

The Pryor-Menz Concert Service of Council Bluffs, Iowa, booked this tour and was responsible for sending out the press releases mentioned above, three in all, each slightly different. The variation in the three press releases gave the individual school some degree of choice when advertising the production.

Each of the three press releases gave the qualifications and experience of the three actors who would be performing. Paul Shyre was billed as a 28 year old adapter, who acts in and directs "this dramatic narrative

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<sup>10</sup>Information from printed program of The Theatre of Mr. Poe, Kansas State Teachers College engagement, Carney Hall Auditorium, June 14, 1954.

<sup>11</sup>Information from printed program of The Theatre of Mr. Poe, Central Missouri State College engagement, Hendricks Hall, June 15, 1954.

<sup>12</sup>Information from printed program of The Theatre of Mr. Poe, University of Nebraska engagement, Student Union Ballroom, June 16, 1954.

<sup>13</sup>Information from printed program of The Theatre of Mr. Poe, University of Wisconsin engagement, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, June 23, 1954.

in two acts."<sup>14</sup> The press releases went on to give Shyre's educational background, acting and directing experience.

Clement Fowler, also a member of the tour group, graduated from Wayne University. His experience included "Broadway and Philadelphia appearances on the legitimate stage" and "television and radio experience."<sup>15</sup>

The last member of the tour group, Michael Tolin, also graduated from Wayne University in Detroit. The press release provided an interesting note on this performer's background in oral interpretation. In 1946 Tolin

became the first person ever to win first place in both the prose and poetry divisions of the Michigan Inter-Collegiate Interpretative Reading contests. He began his acting career while a student at Wayne University and includes radio and motion picture experience in his comparatively long and varied career.<sup>16</sup>

Asked why he chose Poe's literature for this production, Shyre said something that further indicates his basic philosophy in most of his work with non-dramatic materials. "I just felt Poe was entertainment, particularly for the type of audiences we were playing, and in general the audience reaction was very good, particularly

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<sup>14</sup>Press Book, Theatre of Mr. Poe, Council Bluffs, 1954.

<sup>15</sup>Press Book, Theatre of Mr. Poe, Council Bluffs, 1954.

<sup>16</sup>Press Book, Theatre of Mr. Poe, Council Bluffs, 1954.

the scary parts."<sup>17</sup> This statement, to some extent, reveals the pragmatic concern Shyre continued to manifest throughout his career, a concern for the audience. Certainly not all artists, theatrical or otherwise, would be concerned with the audience and their reaction to the performance. But Shyre's concern for the audience and his interest in preserving the qualities of the original are two of the things that should be pointed out from the outset of this study. These concerns will recur throughout Shyre's work in this area of performance.

Although little else is really known about this first production of non-dramatic literature it was a step closer to a goal Shyre had had since high school, the production of works by Sean O'Casey on Broadway.<sup>18</sup> This dream was not long in becoming a reality, for just two years later he was opening his first O'Casey show, I Knock at the Door.

#### I Knock at the Door

I Knock at the Door was the first novel in a six-volume autobiography written by the late Sean O'Casey. This particular volume recounts the early childhood of an obscure boy in the impoverished slums of Dublin,

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<sup>17</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 11.

<sup>18</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, Los Angeles engagement, U.C.L.A., Haines Hall, November 17-21, 1960.



Ireland. The story commences with the birth of Johnny Casside, who stands for O'Casey. From this point the novel continues through his recurrent bouts with a chronic eye ailment, problems surviving school, church, and at times home. Although Shyre agreed that his second O'Casey adaptation, Pictures in the Hallway, found a larger audience, he personally preferred I Knock at the Door, calling it "a more poignant piece, but Pictures in the Hallway has much more comedy than I Knock at the Door, and I suppose comedy is the more salable and popular commodity."<sup>19</sup> Shyre commented further about this first O'Casey adaptation:

As far as I Knock at the Door, I think the lasting success of it is the fact the theme of it is an eternal theme. It will always be timely because it deals with childhood, it deals with the youth. It deals with the youth of a very great poet and playwright and it shows that under enormously adverse conditions he was able to overcome all this and became a great writer. I think it's the sort of story most people admire and cherish and the writing is poignant and lovely, and that's why it has lasted.<sup>20</sup>

The London Times Literary Supplement for March 4, 1939, described the novel as moving "with a gusto and exuberance which bring us back to his [O'Casey's] first plays."<sup>21</sup> It seems interesting that both Shyre and the London Times have expressed the same thing in different

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<sup>19</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup>The London Times Literary Supplement, March 4, 1939, p. 131.

ways. Shyre has said that certain writers have written things that lend themselves to the theatre and the Times compared this first novel to O'Casey's "first plays." The inference seems to be that both sources saw something theatrical or dramatic in the novel. The Times article continued, "Borrowing the method which Joyce and others have made popular, he plunges into the double stream of conscious and Rabelaisian vernacular. But there is a lyric race in his rhythms which is all his own."<sup>22</sup> In another book review, for The New Yorker, Louis Kronenberger said,

It is very simple, and once in a while it is dull. But in it, O'Casey has caught a child's peculiar quickwittedness and acumen, his mysterious humor and inscrutable melancholy, his prescience that a world offered to him by grown-ups as square is really round. All this would be less rewarding than it is had not O'Casey the Irishman's charm of style. . . .<sup>23</sup>

It is fascinating that the things Shyre capsulized as reasons for the success of his adaptation of I Knock at the Door are similar to the reasons given for the success of the novel in the first place. The problems of a child growing up, especially in such adverse conditions, would have great appeal, but O'Casey's style, even more than the plot, impressed both Shyre and the reviewers of the novel. O'Casey seemed to take potentially dull subject

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<sup>22</sup>London Times Literary Supplement, p. 131.

<sup>23</sup>Louis Kronenberger, The New Yorker, July 22, 1939, p. 73.

matter and individualize it in a manner that was like living it over again with the author, and, as Shyre was quick to point out, O'Casey did it in a "poignant and lovely" style.<sup>24</sup> The premiere performance of Shyre's first O'Casey adaptation was important because the critical response to this production provided ample encouragement for Shyre's continued work in this production style.

Premiere performance, I Knock at the Door, 1956

Shyre's first recognized professional adaptation of non-dramatic literature appeared at the Kaufmann Auditorium in New York City, March 18, 1956. In an interview with Edward King, Shyre observed, "'I first contacted O'Casey in 1956 and asked him if I could do one or two performances of an adaptation I had written of his I Knock at the Door at the Y.M.H.A. [Young Men's Hebrew Association] in New York.'"<sup>25</sup> The Y.M.-Y.W.H.A. was "a constituent society of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies"<sup>26</sup> which supported the cultural programs of the Poetry Center. Shyre directed and performed in a large number of productions in association with this

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<sup>24</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup>Edward King, "O'Casey: A Cruel Genius," The New Haven Register, May 13, 1973, pp. 1 and 5.

<sup>26</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, New York City engagement, Kaufmann Concert Hall, May 27, 1956.

group, including the initial performance of Pictures in the Hallway and this first adaptation, I Knock at the Door. Shyre said, "He [O'Casey] agreed and just by chance Brooks Atkinson saw the show and gave it a rave review. That started the ball rolling."<sup>27</sup>

The Atkinson review that Shyre referred to was indeed complimentary:

Sean O'Casey's I Knock at the Door seemed like a little masterpiece of prose literature when it was published in 1939.

There is no reason to revise that opinion now that Paul Shyre has made a concert reading of it. The two glowing performances yesterday afternoon and evening at the Kaufmann Auditorium, Lexington Avenue and Ninety-second Street, were of such high quality that additional performances ought to be arranged somehow. Why are so many of the fine events in this town permitted to die before they have fairly begun?<sup>28</sup>

After touching on the tone of O'Casey's prose writing style and the imaginative direction of Stuart Vaughan, Atkinson's praise concluded, "Like the book from which the material is drawn, the performance is a work of art. Some of O'Casey's elaborately planned dramas do not touch the soul of the race so adroitly as this delicate tale of the slums of Dublin."<sup>29</sup> The additional performances

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<sup>27</sup>King, "O'Casey," pp. 1 and 5.

<sup>28</sup>Brooks Atkinson, "I Knock at the Door," New York Times, March 19, 1956, p. 26, col. 5.

<sup>29</sup>Atkinson, "I Knock," p. 26. col. 5.

Atkinson hoped "would be arranged" came to Broadway's Belasco Theatre more than one year later.

Belasco Theatre, New York City production, 1957.

This second production of I Knock at the Door is considered to be the first major presentation of the work and, in fact, is the one listed in the published play-script of 1958. By this time Pictures in the Hallway, the second O'Casey adaptation, had been presented by the Poetry Center. Jerry Tallmer's review for the Village Voice described I Knock at the Door in the following manner,

As the spots dimmed and Staats Cotsworth, turning the page for the last time said with grave and dramatic inflection: "If he hadn' gone in the house, he had knocked on the door," the lady sitting at my right gave a long low sudden shocked-sigh and said: "Oh, I didn't want it to end." And that was the way I felt too. . . . If you missed last year's Pictures in the Hallway you will want to make up for it by seeing I Knock at the Door. . . .<sup>30</sup>

Tallmer's review was wholly positive, and he praised the "six splendid actors," Stuart Vaughan's "faultless direction,"<sup>31</sup> and Shyre's ability in two areas, adapting and performing.

I Knock at the Door opened September 29, 1957, and closed after forty-eight performances on November 10, 1957. The cast for this production differed from

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<sup>30</sup>Jerry Tallmer, "Theatre Uptown: O'Casey Honored, West Traduced," The Village Voice, October 9, 1957, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup>Tallmer, "O'Casey Honored," p. 7.

the original Y.M.H.A. cast in that Robert Geiringer was replaced by Roy Poole for the Broadway run. The "concert reading," as Shyre's first two adaptations of the O'Casey materials were often called, was produced by Lucille Lortel, Paul Shyre, and Howard Gottfried.

Other relevant information about this production and other productions covered by this study appear in the appendixes. The information is listed according to the title of the script and after that is arranged in chronological order beginning with the first documented performance and continuing with subsequent tours and revivals.

The critical response to I Knock at the Door was overwhelmingly positive, like the review by Arthur Gelb of the New York Times, September 3, 1957: "Thanks to the single-minded devotion of Paul Shyre to the cause of Sean O'Casey, we now have I Knock at the Door on Broadway. This is where it richly deserves to be."<sup>32</sup> The Gelb review was representative of the critical reaction to these early adaptations of the O'Casey novels. "The tenderness, the humor, the anguish and, above all, the poetry that sings from O'Casey's pages are being stunningly evoked on the stage of the Belasco Theatre."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Arthur Gelb, "I Knock at the Door," The New York Times, September 30, 1957, p. 27, col. 2.

<sup>33</sup>Gelb, "I Knock," p. 27, col. 2.

This response was not only reported to New York City readers but, as early as October 12, 1957, John Beaufort wrote an article for Boston readers indicating two choice entertainments of this type in New York theatres.

Two of the most attractive among Broadway's new entertainments are A Boy Growing Up at the Longacre Theater and I Knock at the Door, at the Belasco. They abound in a welcome good cheer and mellow humanity. It is not that either Dylan Thomas's autobiographical stories (arranged by Emlyn Williams) or Sean O'Casey's autobiographical stories (arranged by Paul Shyre) indulges in phony optimism.<sup>34</sup>

Both O'Casey and Thomas, Beaufort went on to say, "possess too much perception and common sense for that."<sup>35</sup> It is interesting to note that, like Shyre, Beaufort points to the mellow humanity and good cheer of I Knock at the Door as key appeals that made for its success.

The production script indicated that the six actors should be provided with "6 Black stools with seat pads (green), 6 Lecturns (metal) with adjustable height and tilt, 6 Black springback binders for readers, 1 pair of glasses for Narrator, Pack of cigarettes (Narrator), and 1 Cigarette lighter (Narrator)."<sup>36</sup> The use of stools, stands, and scripts resulted directly from the production concept used in the Charles Laughton production of G. B.

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<sup>34</sup>Shyre Collection, Mugar Memorial Library, Boston University, Box 3, folder 4.

<sup>35</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 3, folder 4.

<sup>36</sup>Paul Shyre, I Knock at the Door (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1966), p. 70.

Shaw's Don Juan in Hell, the third act of Shaw's larger work, Man and Superman. When asked what influenced the staging of I Knock at the Door, Shyre responded,

I would say there were two big influences for that. One was when I saw the original production of Don Juan in Hell and the other was shortly after that, seeing Emlyn Williams doing his Charles Dickens reading. The staging of all the O'Casey readings would, I say, be directly influenced by those two productions.<sup>37</sup>

However, Shyre's later practice contradicted this statement a bit since Drums Under the Windows was staged with more detail, costume, and movement than these earlier "concert readings." However, the lack of movement, costumes, and other trappings did not seem to hurt the response to this performance. The Gelb review further stated,

so much feeling was generated in a brief scene where Johnny is caned by a sadistic schoolmaster that last night's audience burst into applause when the enraged boy brought the ebony ruler down on the head of his tormentor. (And all of this without props--with the merest suggestion of gestures.)<sup>38</sup>

Although staging for I Knock at the Door was similar to that of Don Juan in Hell, casting was different. I Knock at the Door called for multiple casting. The script shows clearly how each part was designated by character name and stool number:

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<sup>37</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 12.

<sup>38</sup>Gelb, "I Knock," p. 27, col. 2.



Stool No. 1.....Staats Cotsworth.....Narrator and 2nd  
Driver

Stool No. 2.....Roy Poole.....Cab man, Conductor, man in  
Hospital, Mr. Story, 1st  
Driver, Micheal, and the  
Clergyman at Cemetery

Stool No. 3.....Paul Shyre.....Doctor, Father, Old man,  
Archie, 3rd Driver, and  
Street singer

Stool No. 4.....Aline MacMahon.....Mother

Stool No. 5.....George Brenlin.....Johnny Casside

Stool No. 6.....Rae Allen.....Nurse, Aunt, Ella, and  
Woman at Wake<sup>39</sup>

It is evident that anyone cast in this production would need some unique abilities or, as Shyre put it, "it was very important that I got very versatile actors."<sup>40</sup> This was particularly true for the first adaptations, I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway, because "the only two parts that remain stationary as far as playing one person was the mother, which I was very fortunate to get an actress like Aline MacMahon. . . ."<sup>41</sup>

This pattern of casting did not fall into place until after the first two pages. During these pages all performers were designated "narrator," i.e., Narrator 1, 2, 3, etc. In other words, all performers shared in the descriptive narration for the first two pages and then

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<sup>39</sup>Shyre, I Knock, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, pp. 14-15.

<sup>41</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 15.

read as indicated above for the rest of the production.<sup>42</sup>

The property plot showed the stools set approximately four feet apart to avoid spotlight spill from one performing area to another. Further, the narrator's stool was placed approximately five feet from Stool No. 2 downstage and turned stage right slightly. One hundred and seventy light cues are indicated, consisting mainly of individual spots that were "up" when characters were speaking and "out" when the performer was not involved in the scene. Twenty-two musical cues and five song excerpts were part of the live incidental music.<sup>43</sup>

"Delicate snatches of music are woven into the reading; an offstage flute plays wistful Irish tunes and nearly all the actors at one point or other burst briefly and appropriately into a native tune."<sup>44</sup>

The popularity of Shyre's work in adaptation spread and in 1960 he was invited to direct I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway on the West Coast. By this time Shyre had successfully produced the works of Poe, two of the O'Casey novels, and Dos Passos' U.S.A.

The Theatre Group: 1960 Los Angeles Production.

The Theatre Group at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1960 was a non-profit joint venture

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<sup>42</sup>Shyre, I Knock, pp. 5-7.

<sup>43</sup>Shyre, I Knock, pp. 76-77.

<sup>44</sup>Gelb, "I Knock," p. 27, col. 2.

between U.C.L.A. and the theatrical, television, and motion picture professionals with a common goal, "to present outstanding classical and contemporary plays in Los Angeles."<sup>45</sup> At the time Robert Ryan was president of the group and John Houseman vice-president and artistic director. Under these happy circumstances Paul Shyre was asked to direct a production of I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway in Los Angeles. The production of I Knock took place at U.C.L.A. outside the Schoenberg Hall in Haines Hall amphitheater November 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14, 1960. As indicated, this performance was in two parts, I Knock being performed on the dates mentioned above, followed by part two, Pictures in the Hallway, on November 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21.<sup>46</sup> Most of the data concerning this performance comes from an informative program printed for the occasion by the Theatre Group. It is interesting to note here that Chancellor Franklin D. Murphy exhibited his private collection of O'Casey books, correspondence, and manuscripts in the Main Library at U.C.L.A. from November third through the thirtieth. "Included in the exhibit together with a number of first editions and proof copies of O'Casey's plays, are several letters to

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<sup>45</sup>Information from printed program of I Knock at the Door, Los Angeles engagement, U.C.L.A., Haines Hall, November 10-14, 1960.

<sup>46</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, Los Angeles engagement, U.C.L.A., Haines Hall, November 17-21, 1960.

Dr. Murphy and photographs of Sean O'Casey."<sup>47</sup> The audience was invited to view as much of the collection as they could during a ten minute intermission in the performance. O'Casey himself had written Chancellor Murphy about the production, "'I hope the Readings may be enjoyed by all who come to hear them, and if they do, a lot of the enjoyment will be due to the clever adaptation done by Paul Shyre.'"<sup>48</sup> Also, it was in this program that Shyre substantiated the fact that he had become interested in O'Casey while attending De Witt Clinton High School in New York City. After reading Juno and the Paycock, he began an "intense study of all O'Casey had written and made a vow to bring as much as he could to the New York stage."<sup>49</sup> Shyre, in his 1982 interview, further told of seeing "a production of The Silver Tassie which played in some studio theatre, the Carnegie Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall--a very small room." Shyre went on,

I remember the leading role, the juvenile, was played by Jack Palance and I remember being rather profoundly moved by it. The play stayed with me a long time and I started to read many of his [O'Casey's] plays after that.<sup>50</sup>

From this information it is difficult to say exactly "when" Shyre became interested in the O'Casey autobiographies,

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<sup>47</sup>Printed program, Pictures, U.C.L.A., 1960.

<sup>48</sup>Printed program, Pictures, U.C.L.A., 1960.

<sup>49</sup>Printed program, Pictures, U.C.L.A., 1960.

<sup>50</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 12.

but he did start with O'Casey's dramatic works and followed this specific interest to the general literary works or non-dramatic materials.

After the Los Angeles engagement of I Knock and Pictures the next opportunity to produce O'Casey's material came in New York City, 1964. In some ways, many of the shows adapted by Shyre were opportunistic. This is to say, they were either written or revived in connection with the author's death or a celebration of his birth, e.g., Yeats, O'Casey. Such circumstances prompted several of the 1964 productions of I Knock and Pictures.

Hurrahs! and Faretheewells: Imperial Theatre, New York City, 1964. Sean O'Casey died September 18, 1964. On October twelfth of that same year The New York Shakespeare Festival honored his memory with Hurrahs! and Faretheewells: The Theatre's Tribute to Sean O'Casey, adapted by Paul Shyre and directed by him and Joseph Papp, then president of the Shakespeare Festival Board. Shyre's "adaptations of I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway formed the bulk of the tribute. . . ." <sup>51</sup> It is interesting and complimentary to Shyre's work that with all of the plays O'Casey had written, several of which had long runs in New York City, the Festival chose Shyre's adaptations of non-dramatic materials as the "theatre's"

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<sup>51</sup>Stuart Little, "Evening of O'Casey Theater a Tribute," New York Herald Tribune, October 12, 1964, n.p.

tribute to O'Casey's memory. This action was probably done, in part, because autobiographies were about O'Casey, but it is doubtful they would have been used as a tribute had they not been well thought of in other ways. It is also true that these pieces are easily staged since they required a minimal definition to be effective, but even that would not fully explain the choice. The Shyre adaptations must have been selected because they were considered to be representative of good theater, good literature, good adaptation, and some of O'Casey's best writing.

The performance itself was most impressive, "Only at the beginning was there talk of the final grey, almost sightless months. Aline MacMahon read a letter from O'Casey's widow telling of the last sickness," then, "Brooks Atkinson, drama critic emeritus of the Times and Richard Watt, Jr., drama critic of the Post, read excerpts from letters O'Casey had sent them."<sup>52</sup> During most of the evening, however, "Actors [and actresses] paid their tribute to the late Sean O'Casey . . . mostly in his own words."<sup>53</sup> The production was staged in a simple manner as the previous productions had been, with one exception. A large Hirshfield caricature of O'Casey dominated the

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<sup>52</sup>Norman Nadel, "Festival Pays Tribute to Sean O'Casey," New York World-Telegram and Sun, October 12, 1964, n.p.

<sup>53</sup>Little, "Evening of O'Casey, n.p.

otherwise unadorned stage. The different roles for this production were played not by six actors, but rather by an impressive cast of New York's finest theatrical luminaries. Since this cast is impressive and the cast list not readily available, it has been included here along with the role assignments for each cast member. Note that in a regular production these roles were performed by only "six" performers:

Hurrahs! and Faretheewells: Cast (in order of speaking)

Narrators.....	Staats Cotsworth, David Wayne, Fred Clark, Kevin McCarthy
Mrs. Casside.....	Aline MacMahon
Aunt.....	Mildred Dunnock
Tram Conductor.....	Fred Clark
Ella Casside.....	Tammy Grimes
Archie Casside.....	Kevin McCarthy
Patient.....	David Wayne
Woman Patient.....	Lillian Gish
Mr. Story.....	Kevin McCarthy
Mr. Casside.....	Fred Clark
Johnny Casside.....	Martin Sheen
Cab Drivers.....	Eric Berry, Fred Clark, David Wayne
Mrs. Saunders.....	Lillian Gish
Clergyman.....	Fred Clark
Michael.....	William Prince
Uncle Tom.....	Morris Carnovsky
Warder.....	William Prince
Mr. Antony.....	Eric Berry
Mr. Greenburg.....	Morris Carnovsky
Mr. Dyke.....	Kevin McCarthy
Alice Boyd.....	Rae Allen
Mrs. Nearus.....	Mildred Dunnock
Ayamonn O'Farrel.....	David Wayne
Old Woman.....	Mildred Natwick
Daisey Battles.....	Julie Harris
	and
	The Clancy Brothers and Tom Maken <sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Information from printed programs of Hurrahs! and Faretheewells: The Theatre's Tribute to Sean O'Casey, New York engagement, Imperial Theatre, October 11, 1964.

Several members of this cast also played multiple roles; however, this production included the largest cast ever assembled to perform any single production of the O'Casey adaptations. Other, later productions altered the number of players, but none so much as this one. Later that same year I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway were brought to the stage of New York's Theatre de Lys.

Theatre de Lys, New York City production, 1964.

Again, the revivals of I Knock and Pictures were done as a memorial to O'Casey. Jack Thompson indicated that the proceeds from this limited engagement would "all go to Mrs. O'Casey."<sup>55</sup> This performance also opened with the reading of a letter which had been written to the producer of the show, Lucille Lortel. "Before the performance Peggy Wood read a most beautiful letter from O'Casey's widow to Miss Lortel."<sup>56</sup> The production opened November 24, 1964, and closed after eighteen performances on December 13, 1964.

Again the performance and the performers received rave reviews.

This sort of performance, a dramatic reading, is the most formidable challenge for words and the voices that toss them to the audience. They must hold the audience, yet let its imagination create the invisible scenes that the sounds from the stage evoke. The sextet seated on stools

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<sup>55</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 3, folder 4.

<sup>56</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 3, folder 4.



behind lecterns, declaiming before a soft blue backdrop could not have been more happily selected for the chore.<sup>57</sup>

Another critic, W.M.H. van Okker, also complimented the work he saw on stage. "The simple strength of O'Casey's melodic and poetic words is all there, as are his characters and story. . . ." <sup>58</sup> He further pointed out moments when each performer especially created the "mood, characters, [and] story" so that they all "came alive."<sup>59</sup>

It might be noted here that although many of Shyre's productions were limited engagements, as opposed to longer runs or runs whose length was based on critical response, the length of the run should not be construed as an indication of their popularity or importance. Any show that takes up the limited time and space in major American theaters, especially those in New York, has to be considered important. Furthermore, Shyre's adaptations continued to be revived and new shows received even larger hearings.

White Barn Theatre, Westport, Connecticut Production, 1965. The last production of I Knock at the Door to be documented in this study was performed at the

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<sup>57</sup>Richard F. Shepherd, "I Knock at the Door," The New York Times, November 26, 1964, p. 53.

<sup>58</sup>W.M.H. van Okker, "The Theatre: I Knock at the Door," The Villager, December 3, 1964, p. 16.

<sup>59</sup>van Okker, "I Knock," p. 16.

White Barn Theatre in Westport, Connecticut. The founder and director of this theatre was Lucille Lortel, who has been and continues to be associated with Shyre and his production of professional performances of non-dramatic literature. However, Shyre has been quick to point out, "The only part that Lucille might have played is that she acted as a co-producer for some of the productions that I did."<sup>60</sup> Shyre listed several of the productions they had worked on together, then summarized, "But outside of that I wouldn't say that she was in any way an influence on my career whatsoever."<sup>61</sup> However, both Shyre and Lortel were obviously people interested in theatrical experimentation. In fact, this was the main purpose for the establishment of the Connecticut theatre.

Lortel established The White Barn Theatre in 1947 with the singular purpose of "presenting works of an unusual and experimental nature."<sup>62</sup> She had won an Obie for "fostering and furthering the spirit of theatrical experiment and an award from the New York Chapter of A.N.T.A. for her outstanding achievements as Artistic Director of the Matinee Series."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, pp. 13-14.

<sup>61</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 14.

<sup>62</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, Westport, Conn. engagement, White Barn Theatre, July 18, 1965.

<sup>63</sup>Printed program, Pictures, Westport, Conn., 1965.

The White Barn was a prestigious theatre. Lortel had on her Board of Directors Ralph Alswang and Eva LeGallienne. Mr. Alswang was a noted lighting designer and director who had been associated with many Broadway productions including "Home of the Brave, Peter Pan, King Lear, The Rainmaker, Tunnel of Love, Sunrise at Campobello, and the prizewinning A Raisin in the Sun." <sup>64</sup>

Eva LeGallienne was the daughter of actor-poet Richard LeGallienne and was trained in acting at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London. She had appeared on Broadway in The Cherry Orchard, The Rivals, L'Aiglon, and Uncle Harry. Further, "She starred as Queen Elizabeth in the National Phoenix Theatre's production of Mary Stuart, a role she also re-created on television." <sup>65</sup> LeGallienne taught Ibsen, Chekov, and Shakespeare at the White Barn "where many young actors [and actresses] have benefited from her genius." The program credits concluded, "She has received more honors and awards than have been accorded any other woman in our theatre." <sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Printed program, Pictures, Westport, Conn., 1965.

<sup>65</sup>Printed program, Pictures, Westport, Conn., 1965.

<sup>66</sup>Printed program, Pictures, Westport, Conn., 1965.

Most of this information came from the aforementioned program for the performance of I Knock at the Door held July 18, 1965. The cast for this performance included Paul Shyre, Anne Meacham, Dermot McNamara, Stephen Elliot, and Wayne Maxwell, and featured Jesse Royce Landis as the mother.

### Pictures in the Hallway

Pictures in the Hallway is the second novel of the six written by Sean O'Casey describing his life as a boy growing up in Dublin. This volume continued where I Knock at the Door left off and covered the years of O'Casey's adolescence and youth, when he acquired and lost his first job, read history and poetry, and learned of love. Horace Reynolds reviewed the novel for the New York Times:

This life of O'Casey will take its proper place beside the several distinguished autobiographies which have come out of Ireland. Unlike Moore, Yeats, and Joyce, who had no beliefs, O'Casey believes and stands passionately for the masses. . . . That belief and love give dignity and purpose to the life of which O'Casey writes.<sup>67</sup>

### Premiere performance, Pictures in the Hallway, 1956

Paul Shyre's second adaptation from the O'Casey works was produced Sunday May 27, 1956. This production, Pictures in the Hallway, also premiered at the Kaufmann Concert Hall in New York City. Again, the Poetry Center

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<sup>67</sup>Horace Reynolds, The New York Times, March 22, 1942, p. 5.

produced Pictures in the Hallway as they had I Knock at the Door the year before. Again, Brooks Atkinson had many good things to say about the new production in his New York Times review.

Being unable to repeat the reading of O'Casey's I Knock at the Door, the Poetry Center troupe has done the next best thing. It has made a reading from the second volume in the O'Casey autobiography, Pictures in the Hallway. . . .<sup>68</sup>

Atkinson went on to credit Shyre's adaptation, saying that this reading retained "the tenderness and the glory of the original."<sup>69</sup> But in the midst of his praise for the production he injected a warning,

The O'Casey autobiography is famous for its singing prose style, an unintelligible word or phrase is a flaw that cannot be dismissed as trivial. Not every line was carefully turned at the matinee performance. There were qualities in the script that were lost to that extent.<sup>70</sup>

However, Atkinson returned to a theme he had introduced in the review of I Knock at the Door when he said, "Pity that these wonderful readings have to disappear before they have fairly started."<sup>71</sup> Pictures did not "disappear." Later that same year it opened at the Playhouse Theatre in New York City.

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<sup>68</sup>Brooks Atkinson, "Pictures in the Hallway," The New York Times, May 25, 1956, p. 23.

<sup>69</sup>Atkinson, "Pictures," p. 23.

<sup>70</sup>Atkinson, "Pictures," p. 23.

<sup>71</sup>Atkinson, "Pictures," p. 23.

The Playhouse Theatre Production, New York City, 1957. The same cast that had performed Pictures for the Poetry Center repeated it at the Playhouse Theatre. As the cast members had done in I Knock, each performer in Pictures played more than one of the twenty-seven roles necessary for the production. Again, as in Pictures, all performers participated in the opening pages of descriptive narration.<sup>72</sup> The stage directions in the published script from 1956 indicated the multiple roles by stool designation, e.g., the performer at Stool #1 performs the Narrator, a conductor, and a doctor. Further, the beginning split-narration was at times spoken in unison. The split narration and unison speaking continued for the first two pages, and then each cast member began his or her assigned role. The staging concept for this production of Pictures remained the same as that of I Knock at the Door. Each of the stools used in the production was set approximately thirty inches apart to avoid the spilling over of individual spotlights from one performer's stool area to another. The narrator's stool was placed about eight inches closer to the audience and angled back toward the other players approximately forty-five degrees.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Paul Shyre, Pictures in the Hallway (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1956), pp. 5-6.

<sup>73</sup>Shyre, Pictures, p. 68.

This production also received excellent reviews, like the one written by Lewis Funke for the New York Times, September 17, 1956.

Once again the music of Sean O'Casey's prose can be heard in a midtown playhouse. . . . Each of the episodes--a young boy's first encounter with the turbulence of Ireland's fight for freedom, his first job, a serious illness in his family, a visit to a jail, his passionate infatuation with a young miss, the rise of his own individuality--has a clarity and humanity of its own thanks to players who not only relish O'Casey but also know how to take pleasure in his vivid language, his pithy, glistening humor.<sup>74</sup>

Funke complimented the performers and the performance, "On a bare stage, but with the aid of magnificent lighting and their own enthusiasm and talent, they make Pictures in the Hallway something to cherish."<sup>75</sup>

In the interview Shyre pointed out that a key to the staging was simplicity. Further, he repeatedly mentioned the importance of the lighting. Shyre admitted that some people tend to think they are not seeing theatre when the staging is minimal.

So there are people with built-in resistance to this sort of thing. But I think once the actors and the material--once the actors paint the pictures clearly, the pictures are transmitted to the audience and in due time even though there may be stools and lecterns, they are seeing in their mind's eye all the scenery and costumes necessary.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Lewis Funke, "O'Casey's 'Pictures in the Hallway' Returns," The New York Times, September 17, 1956, p. 23.

<sup>75</sup>Funke, "O'Casey's 'Pictures,'" p. 23.

<sup>76</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 16.

This sounds a great deal like "theatre of the mind," a concept for readers theatre espoused by Coger and White in their widely used textbook.<sup>77</sup>

As far as the adaptation itself, Shyre has said that his major goal when "cutting" was to make "the whole thing flow as a unified dramatic piece."<sup>78</sup> "It meant encapsulating several characters into one--sometimes three different situations, three different scenes, into one scene for the sake of dramatic effectiveness."<sup>79</sup> From the critics' reactions to his work it seems that he achieved both the unity he wanted and the dramatic effectiveness. These methods and the acclaim for them contributed to his stature as one of the foremost practitioners of this theatrical genre.

Ravinia Theater, Chicago, Illinois, 1957. This production of Pictures in the Hallway was the first documented midwestern production of any of the O'Casey adaptations. In 1957 the Ravinia Theater in Chicago "launched its 22nd North Shore festival by presenting Sean O'Casey's Pictures in the Hallway in its newly restored theater, whose charms do not include air

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<sup>77</sup> Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White, Readers Theatre Handbook (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973).

<sup>78</sup> Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 17.

<sup>79</sup> Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 18.



conditioning."<sup>80</sup> The reviews for this production tended to describe the problems with the theatre as much as they did the production itself. For example, Claudia Cassidy's review gave a description of the theatre's problems with train noise, made more obvious because the windows in the theater were open. The windows were open because of the lack of air conditioning, an arrangement which let in not only noise but also a large number of mosquitoes. Cassidy rounded out her review in the Chicago Daily Tribune with the plea, "who wants to air condition a charming playhouse?"<sup>81</sup> Herman Kogan of the Chicago Sun-Times, commenting on the opening, said

Little social hoopla but the inevitable tedium of welcoming remarks, a night warm and stuffy and the hall equally so, the rush of passing trains roaring above the dialogue and squadrons of mosquitoes terrifyingly aggressive in their nipping.<sup>82</sup>

However, Kogan did get around to complimenting Shyre's Chicago production of Pictures, concluding the review, "Considering the physical handicaps confronting the talented company it was amazing that the reading, despite a slip or two, went so well."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Claudia Cassidy, "On the Aisle: It Wasn't Even a Fine Night for the Irish as Ravinia Theater Steams," Chicago Daily Tribune, June 18, 1957, part 1, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup>Cassidy, "Ravinia Steams," p. 1.

<sup>82</sup>Herman Kogan, "Ravinia Theater Opens with an O'Casey Piece," Chicago Sun-Times, June 18, 1957, p. 38.

<sup>83</sup>Kogan, "Ravinia," p. 38.

Claudia Cassidy, however, was not nearly so kind when she referred to the performance by narrator Arthur Shields.

If you ever saw Mr. Shields in Playboy of the Western World, you have your choice of possibilities about this present failure. He is new at it, having recently taken over from Staats Cotsworth. Well, he did, but I'm not sure that is the problem. Mr. Shields could act the spots off a double handful of Pictures roles. A narrator is quite another thing. Narration is background, setting, aura, feel, and taste. It sets the stage and conditions the audience. Mr. Shields just confuses matters. You can't understand him. He creates a fog thru [sic] which the actors stab for attention.<sup>84</sup>

Another critic, Don Henahan contended the cast "performed bravely despite the night's spirit-draining conditions."<sup>85</sup>

The reviews for this production were mixed. Further, these reviews offered the first evidence of any critic's taking exception to the choice of literature itself. Roger Dettmer chose to discuss O'Casey's writing talent, saying, "What of Pictures? It is not, first off, anything like the provocative theater-experience Don Juan in Hell managed to be. O'Casey has neither the civilized wit nor the intellectual economy of his countryman and contemporary Bernard Shaw." Dettmer went on to say that at times O'Casey seemed like a "Gaelic gasbag" and further criticized Pictures because

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<sup>84</sup>Cassidy, "Ravinia Steams," p. 1.

<sup>85</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #4.

it studies Johnny Casside . . . his first job, his first girl, his first experience with sex. Some of this is warmly, keenly written; some of it, however, is clogged with cliches that even O'Casey's admirers must wince at the commonness [sic].<sup>86</sup>

This did seem to be an isolated opinion but it certainly contrasted with others' estimation of the literature Shyre used for this adaptation. Further, it must be noted that many of the critics spent time describing areas peripheral to the performance, perhaps indicating that they might have been affected by the adverse conditions under which they had to view the performance. From the descriptions one can believe that these conditions could have colored the perceptions of even the most objective critic. More than likely, the conditions in the theatre really did affect the performers as well, though to what degree these variables affected the reviews or the performance cannot be measured.

Phoenix Theatre, New York City, 1959. Two years later, in 1959, a revival of Pictures in the Hallway came to the Phoenix Theatre in New York City. The production opened Saturday, December 26, of that year and closed Sunday, January 3, 1960, after eleven performances. "Lysistrata having been planted in the burying yard-- permanently one hopes--and Peer Gynt being as yet

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<sup>86</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #4.

unready, the Phoenix has produced Sean O'Casey's Pictures in the Hallway for the interim engagement."<sup>87</sup> Brooks Atkinson's review for the New York Times went on to say that "these readings are not for the general public. Probably they demand more concentrated attention than most people are willing to give."<sup>88</sup> Atkinson rewarded this Shyre production with the same high praise other productions had won from him in the past.

Possibly the current performance is no better than the original. Possibly it seems better only because it is fresher in the mind. But Donald Madden's cheerful portrait of Johnny and Gerry Jedd's laughing, blushing portraits of the girls have an evocative beauty that shines with youth. The other actors are admirable. . . . A first rate interlude between two formal dramas, Pictures in the Hallway rids the mind of Lysistrata.<sup>89</sup>

This presentation is an example of the ability of concert style readings to be produced on short notice. Because this type of reading could be so easily staged, it had several opportunities to fill spots that other, more complicated dramatic pieces could not have done.

The Theatre Group, Los Angeles, California, 1960.

As has been stated before, Pictures in the Hallway was often presented back to back with another of Shyre's adaptations of the O'Casey novels, I Knock at the Door.

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<sup>87</sup> Brooks Atkinson, Review of "Pictures", The New York Times, December 28, 1959, p. 19.

<sup>88</sup> Atkinson, "Pictures," p. 19.

<sup>89</sup> Atkinson, "Pictures," p. 19.

The first reason for their presentation in this manner was their similarity of staging. Both had the same number of cast members, and both were staged in the concert reading style Shyre indicated had so impressed him with Don Juan in Hell. Second, the two adaptations were taken from the first two autobiographical novels and therefore followed each other chronologically. The 1960 production in Los Angeles was an example of this back to back presentation, which was discussed in the preceding section.

Mermaid Theatre, 1962, London Production. On October 1, 1962, The London Times reported the first instance of a Shyre adaptation being done abroad. Later, A Whitman Portrait and I Knock at the Door were also produced in London. The distinguished cast for this presentation included Peter O'Toole and Maggie Smith. Others in the cast included Jack MacGowran, as the narrator; Marie Kean; Donal Donnelly; and Godfrey Quigley. The London Times reviewer was not overly impressed with the prose from which the adaptation was taken. "To read, the book is likely to be disappointing, if your object is to learn from it as much as possible about the author; for there is little of him in it."<sup>90</sup> The reading, however, was another matter. "You do not miss Sean if, as

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<sup>90</sup> Review, "Mr. O'Casey and His Young Self," The London Times, October 1, 1962, p. 17.

in last night's reading . . . [the readers] bring the people of Sean's, or rather Johnny's world fully to life."<sup>91</sup> In fact, according to this reviewer, the readers actually improved on the original text by editing out parts of it.

By understatement they [the readers] positively improved the text at points. Mr. MacGowran's "throwing away" an adjective here and a phrase there caused the description of Tom Casside's illness to sound better than it reads.<sup>92</sup>

Theatre de Lys, New York City, 1964. This next production of Pictures was another instance of the presentation of O'Casey works done as a tribute to him after his death and in conjunction with I Knock. Shortly after O'Casey's death in 1964, Lucille Lortel produced Pictures at the Theatre de Lys. Leonard Harris opened his review with a very popular story about an often-mentioned New Yorker cartoon. Shyre also mentioned this cartoon in his discussion of "concert style" reading during the interview. As Harris reports,

There was this New Yorker cartoon: A curtain has risen on a stage that holds only four high stools. And a man turns to his wife and says: "I don't like it already." Please, if you're one of those, fight it.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Review, "O'Casey," London Times, October 1, 1962, p. 17.

<sup>92</sup>Review, "O'Casey," London Times, October 1, 1962, p. 17.

<sup>93</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #4.

He insisted that the stools and other traits like the lack of spectacle must not keep anyone from this production of Pictures. "It's different. For one thing it has six stools. With backs. For another it has six talented actors sitting on them, Rae Allen, Robert Walker, Peggy Wood, Paul Shyre, Stephen Elliott, and Staats Cotsworth."<sup>94</sup> Harris went on to point out another big advantage this reading had over others that might have caused the adverse New Yorker cartoon reaction, "And for its ace in the hole, it has O'Casey, lyrical or funny or fiery, but always charming and unpretentious enough so that he can be given a 'dramatic reading' and never sound stagey."<sup>95</sup> This instance is another example of the first two O'Casey autobiographical novels produced back to back, in this case done as a memorial to the late Sean O'Casey.

Greenwich Mews Theatre, New York City, 1965. In 1965 as a cultural project of the Village Presbyterian Church and the Brotherhood Synagogue, yet another revival of Pictures in the Hallway was presented in New York City at the Greenwich Mews Theatre.<sup>96</sup> Paul Shyre directed and performed in this production. "Together the Village Presbyterian Church and the Brotherhood engaged in a

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<sup>94</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #4.

<sup>95</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #4.

<sup>96</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, New York engagement, Greenwich Mews Theatre, January 19, 1965.

number of community activities to foster better understanding and cooperation."<sup>97</sup> As is true of Shyre's other presentations, this one is difficult to describe at length because the documentation for the production consists of a single program. These productions that were not performed in major theaters have no documented critical response. Even Shyre's interview was little help. However, any documented performance is part of the record, regardless of the amount of specific information available to describe it.

White Barn Theatre, Westport, Connecticut Production, 1965. Also, in 1965 Pictures in the Hallway was produced at the White Barn Theatre, the theatre founded and directed by Lucille Lortel. The information concerning this theatre and its staff has already been discussed in a previous section. Cast members for this performance included John Leighton, Wayne Maxwell, Dermot McNamara, Paul Shyre, and Anne Meacham and featured the noted New York actress Peggy Wood of Sound of Music fame. Shyre directed the production, which was presented July 18, 1965, for one, an 8:30 p.m., performance only. Other information about this production was unavailable.

World Theatre Day, New York City, 1966. The next production of Pictures in the Hallway was of more than passing interest, both because it was a unique honor and

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<sup>97</sup>Printed program, Pictures, Greenwich Mews.



because it clearly indicated the place this type of presentation had made for itself in the competitive world of legitimate theatre. In 1966 Shyre's production of Pictures in the Hallway was selected as part of U.N.E.S.C.O.'s (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) World Theatre Day, "A Gala Evening of Drama, Dance, and Music in honor of World Theatre Day, March 27, 1966, at the Juilliard Hall."<sup>98</sup> The Program for this unique evening began with addresses by Rosamond Gilder, President of the International Theatre Institute, and Roger L. Stevens, who was at that time Chairman of the National Council of the Arts. There was also a message from Mr. René Maheu, Director-General of U.N.E.S.C.O., which was read to the audience by Fredrick O'Neal, President of the Actors Equity Association. After these messages seven dancers from the Robert Joffrey Ballet performed Ropes to the music of the noted composer, Charles Ives. The Abbey Singers--a soprano, countertenor, tenor, bass, and baritone--then sang five musical pieces, including an innovative recitation entitled Fugue on Geography.

Shyre's production of Pictures in the Hallway came at this point in the program.

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<sup>98</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, New York, World Theatre Day engagement, Juilliard Concert Hall, March 27, 1966.

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An Excerpt from Sean O'Casey's Pictures in the Hallway  
 Adapted and Directed by Paul Shyre  
 Helena Carroll - Wayne Maxwell - Anne Revere  
 John Leighton - Alan Mixon - Paul Shyre  
 (Pictures in the Hallway is the second of six autobio-  
 graphical novels by Sean O'Casey)

In the lengthy program pianist Stephen Manes followed the O'Casey performance, playing pieces by Schumann and Schubert and two selections from the works of Chopin. To complete the evening's performance the Merce Cunningham Dance Company performed Composition X with "Sound by John Cage."<sup>99</sup>

It should be noted that the only dramatic theatrical presentation selected for this prestigious occasion was Shyre's adaptation of Pictures in the Hallway. Possibly it was chosen for the simplicity of its staging techniques, and the fact that it met the practical requirements for such a massive evening of theatre. This answer, however, does not provide a complete explanation, for whatever the practical considerations might have been, there was also a strong sense that Shyre's adaptations, like the other presentations during the evening, were representative of the best and most innovative works of the time.

Pictures in the Hallway Tour, 1966. It was also in 1966 that Dick Weaver Productions arranged a tour of

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<sup>99</sup>Printed program, Pictures, Juilliard.

Pictures. The following itinerary, which may be incomplete, has been documented from the materials found in the Paul Shyre Collection at the Mugar Library, Boston University:

Indiana University of Pennsylvania	
Indiana, PA.....	April 14 <sup>100</sup>
State College	
Mansfield, PA.....	April 15 <sup>101</sup>
Adams Memorial Theatre	
Williamstown, MA.....	April 16 <sup>102</sup>
State University College	
Genesco, NY.....	April 20, 21 <sup>103</sup>
Monroe Community College	
Monroe, NY.....	April 22 <sup>104</sup>
St. Lawrence University	
Canton, NY.....	April 24 <sup>105</sup>
Rockland Community College	
Spring Valley, NY.....	May 7 <sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, Indiana University of Pennsylvania engagement. Fisher Auditorium, April 14, 1966.

<sup>101</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, State College engagement. Straughn Auditorium, April 15, 1966.

<sup>102</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, Williamstown, Mass. engagement. The Adams Memorial Theatre, April 16, 1966.

<sup>103</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, State University College engagement. Wadsworth Auditorium, April 20-21, 1966.

<sup>104</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, Monroe Community College engagement. East High School Auditorium, April 22, 1966.

<sup>105</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, St. Lawrence University engagement. Noble Center Auditorium, April 24, 1966.

<sup>106</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, Rockland Community College engagement. College Barn Theatre, May 7, 1966.

Hamilton College  
 Clinton, NY.....?<sup>107</sup>

Two of the programs clearly indicate that the performances, at least those in New York State, were supported by the New York State Council on the Arts. This council was temporarily established in 1960 by Governor Rockefeller and in 1965 was made a permanent agency by the legislature of the State of New York. The Council established four major programs, and the first one listed seemed to be the one that would have provided support for some of the performances of Shyre's tour. The Professional Touring Performing Arts Program was established to offer "local communities an opportunity to see professional concert, dance, opera, and theatre attractions."<sup>108</sup> Other programs included a touring exhibitions project, technical assistance projects, and professional education presentations.<sup>109</sup>

The engagements listed above indicate clearly that Shyre's work was presented in college theatres, as well as regular legitimate theatres. Further, the support given the tour for the New York State arts council provided additional evidence of the sustained high regard in which Shyre's adaptations were held.

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<sup>107</sup>Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, Hamilton College engagement, n.d.

<sup>108</sup>Printed program, Pictures, Hamilton College.

<sup>109</sup>Printed program, Pictures, Hamilton College.

The Forum Theater, New York City Production, 1971.

In 1971, the Forum, a repertory theatre of the Lincoln Center in New York City, presented Pictures in the Hallway. Again, Paul Shyre both directed and performed in the production. The Forum Theater was described as "the intimate playhouse beneath the Beaumont mainstage,"<sup>110</sup> the Beaumont theatre referred to being the Vivian Beaumont Theatre at the Lincoln Center. This production of Shyre's Pictures opened Thursday, April 19, and closed May 15, 1971, after a limited engagement of twenty performances and six previews.<sup>111</sup> Ernest Albrecht wrote one of the few reviews found that referred to this or any other of Shyre's productions as "readers theatre." "In the conventions of reader's theater, the speakers sit on stools using their voices as the primary means of creating character."<sup>112</sup> Albrecht also commented on the idea of letting the partial gesture suggest a more complete action or as it is sometimes called, the "behavioral synecdoche."<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #4

<sup>111</sup>John Willis, ed., Theatre World (New York: Crown Publishers, 1971), p. 136.

<sup>112</sup>Ernest Albrecht, "Mencken Show Smells Like Sauerkraut," The Home News, January 17, 1975, p. 11.

<sup>113</sup>Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White, Readers Theatre Handbook (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973), p. 83.

"Their bodies may shift or suggest various attitudes to help construct the scene."<sup>114</sup>

Another critic, Peggy Stockton, in a radio review for station WMCA said, "It's a concert reading. Six wonderful actors sit on high stools and read in melodious brogue."<sup>115</sup> Albrecht had also commented on this point. "The Irish dialect with its musicality lends itself to this type of vocal chamber music."<sup>116</sup> Stockton's review praised the way the readers let the "Lyric language create a life of its own."<sup>117</sup> She did, however, indicate a bias. "I love O'Casey and the pictures painted with his words are joyous. This type of entertainment doesn't suit everyone's taste. But for those who revel in good language it's richly rewarding."<sup>118</sup> Martin Bookspan, in his television review for station WPIX-TV, indicated a slight alteration in staging from the way it is described in the instructions in the published script. "In adapting and directing Pictures in the Hallway Paul Shyre has employed the technique made famous nearly a quarter century ago by Paul Gregory in his version of Shaw's Don Juan in Hell. In Shyre's

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<sup>114</sup>Albrecht, "Mencken," p. 11.

<sup>115</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 10, Env. #6.

<sup>116</sup>Albrecht, "Mencken," p. 11.

<sup>117</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 10, Env. #6.

<sup>118</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 10, Env. #6.

staging," he continues, "the five actors take their places on stools at the front of the stage with Shyre as narrator on a podium behind them."<sup>119</sup> The original production script placed the narrator between the audience and the other performers. This altered position for the narrator might indicate a slight shift in how Shyre wanted him to be perceived by the audience. The narrator placed above the performers would be perceived in a different way from a narrator who remained beside them and slightly downstage. The upstage elevated narrator would tend to be seen as more in control of the performers. If he is above them, the primary inference would involve a sense of superiority. However, this adjustment was not noted in other reviews found on the production.

David Goldman of CBS radio in New York City was somewhat less favorable in his review.

My thought at intermission was that, on the whole, I'd rather have been listening to the record. The second half, though, was another matter. Suddenly, the energy, charm and roguishness of O'Casey was caught and held by the readers. And Helena Carroll led the way with her portrait of a kept chorus girl.<sup>120</sup>

The New Yorker review by Edith Oliver called Shyre's adaptation a "faithful" one and said of the revival at the Forum, "The show, which has been here several

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<sup>119</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 10, Env. #6.

<sup>120</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #4.

times, was revived last week at the Forum. (For all of me, its revival could become an annual event; I'd just as soon see it once a year for the rest of my life.)"<sup>121</sup> Oliver went on to point out specific moments when individual cast members did especially good work. She had but one real objection to the production and it dealt with the setting and not with the reading. "My only objection is to the backdrop--a large screen on which are projected drifting clouds, and which seems wholly inappropriate to this beautifully concrete and undrifty work."<sup>122</sup>

The New York Times review Friday, April 30, 1971, by Mel Gussow was the first to indicate a reason for the unexpected revival of the O'Casey piece. "With the sudden cancellation of a regularly scheduled play, Pictures in the Hallway, Paul Shyre's adaptation of volume two of Sean O'Casey's autobiography, slipped into Lincoln Center's Forum Theater last night."<sup>123</sup> Gussow summed up what had been reinforced by many other reviewers when he said, "The booking may be abrupt but the play is a treasure."<sup>124</sup> Further, he noted,

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<sup>121</sup>Edith Oliver, "Off Broadway: Boy to Man," The New Yorker, May 8, 1971, p. 90.

<sup>122</sup>Oliver, "Boy to Man," p. 90.

<sup>123</sup>Mel Gussow, "Theatre: Shyre's Winning O'Casey," The New York Times, April 30, 1971, p. 50, col. 1.

<sup>124</sup>Gussow, "Winning O'Casey," p. 50, col. 1.



but the play is not simply an extract. Nor is it an ordinary stage reading--even though the five actors are seated on high stools, occasionally refer to scripts, and address space rather than each other. The play manages to catch the essence of its source and with an absence of theatrics, makes it exceedingly theatrical and dramatic.<sup>125</sup>

Shyre had said the same thing in his interview when he pointed out that the key to all the O'Casey readings was simplicity.

Loretto Heights College Theatre, Denver, Colorado, 1974. In August of 1974 Denver hosted the Santa Fe Opera Company production of La Boheme, the Denver Symphony prepared for a concert with singer Gordon MacRae, and Loretto Heights College invited Paul Shyre to present Pictures in the Hallway on their campus. The production opened Friday, August 2, and closed Sunday, August 4, after a limited engagement of three performances. Shyre performed in and directed the presentation. Further, this production distinguished itself by furnishing another instance where the production was scripted to include an extra cast member. Paul Shyre in the part of the narrator and Eugenia Rawls as the mother (Mrs. Casside) were the professional guest artists for the production, while the remaining five members of the cast were students. "Occasional music was provided by another student, Timothy Lark."<sup>126</sup> Though little other information was

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<sup>125</sup>Gussow, "Winning O'Casey," p. 50, col. 1.

<sup>126</sup>Helen Cass, "'Pictures in the Hallway' Is Moving," The Denver Post, August 3, 1974, p. 4.

available on this production, it was another instance of Shyre's adaptations being performed in a college theatre and it was also another time when Shyre directed as well as performed in his own production.

Lincoln Center Library, New York City, 1975. The next production of Pictures in the Hallway was of special interest since it was one of the few instances of a Shyre production being filmed or videotaped for the permanent collection of a major library. This unique performance, sponsored by The Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library on October 31, 1975, was performed in memory of Margaret Webster. It was videotaped for the library by "T.A.P.E., Inc. [Television Arts for Popular Education]." <sup>127</sup> Presently, the videotape may be viewed at the Lincoln Center branch of the New York City Library, the branch which houses a special Library for the Performing Arts including a complete videotape section (videotapes of many types of major New York theatrical productions, not just plays), collected reviews, and other theatrically related data.

### I Hear America Singing

The next adaptation by Paul Shyre was one of the adaptations that became known to the writer while

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Information from printed program of Pictures in the Hallway, New York engagement. Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, October 31, 1975.

researching this study at the Mugar Library at Boston University. Before that time the writer had not been aware of a Shyre adaptation called I Hear America Singing. Folder one, box number nine of Paul Shyre's collected papers at the Mugar Library, Boston University, contained a typed script of I Hear America Singing. The production was compiled and adapted by Paul Shyre in part from a film script by Joe Wershba. Other sources used in this little-known adaptation included excerpts from Stephen Vincent Benet's poetry, from Anne Frank's diary, from Justice Jackson of the Supreme Court, and many other sources, concluding with Walt Whitman's famous poetic line "I hear America singing!"<sup>128</sup> Shyre indicated that this presentation was the entertainment for a fund-raiser sponsored by the American Jewish Committee.<sup>129</sup> However, since it was performed only once, Shyre's memory of it had faded.

Now for questions about I Hear America Singing, which for the moment I cannot remember much about. I think it was something I did for the American Jewish Committee and I believe it was done at the Waldorf-Astoria and I think in the cast was Basil Rathbone and Betty Field, and Staats Cotsworth, and that's all I remember, but it was just sort of a tribute for a big fund-raising affair and I think it was only this one production which got a very good response.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 9, folder #1.

<sup>129</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 22.

<sup>130</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 22.

Shyre's memory was generally correct. The cast for this "dramatic reading for voices and small orchestra"<sup>131</sup> did include Basil Rathbone, Betty Field, Staats Cotsworth, and one other person whom Shyre forgot, Conrad Nagel. The unpublished script indicated that the single performance took place at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on March 1, 1957. No reviews of this production have been found, but Shyre's statement above indicates a favorable audience response.

The unpublished script gave an excellent description of how this performance was staged. The presentation was set on a bare stage with curtains hung in "cyclorama fashion."<sup>132</sup> To the right and downstage were four lecterns with four high stools behind them, and to the left side of the stools were two chairs with a table between them. Spotlights were directed at each of the individual stools while another spotlight was directed at the area where the table and chairs were placed. The script further indicated that all of the spotlights were capable of being controlled separately. This staging was similar to that for the first O'Casey reading with the exception of the table and chairs as a playing area. However, the concept was the same, in that the lighting was a method of directing attention to the people and areas used in

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<sup>131</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 9, folder #1.

<sup>132</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 9, folder #1.

the performance. Further the spots, while lighting a certain area, would leave other areas in relative darkness so performers could set up the following scene without drawing attention to themselves. Of course, the lighting would also be helpful in many other ways such as in setting and creating a mood, but it does seem that a main function of lighting for many of the Shyre adaptations was to focus, in a definite manner, the attention of the viewers to performers or groups of performers.

As I Hear America Singing began, the curtain was closed, and then as the houselights dimmed a spot came up and actor "A" (each of the readers was designated by a capital letter) stepped in front of the curtain and began reading an excerpt from Benet's Listen to the People:

Out of the flesh, out of the minds and hearts  
Of thousand upon thousand common men,  
Cranks, martyrs, starry-eyed enthusiasts,  
Slow-spoken neighbors, hard to push around,  
Women whose hands were gentle with their kids  
And men with a cold passion for mere justice.  
We made this thing, this dream,  
This land unsatisfied by little ways, . . .

We made it and we make it and it's ours.  
We shall maintain it. It shall be sustained.<sup>133</sup>

The same reader then continued, "America emerged out of obscurity into history only some four centuries ago. It is the newest of great nations. . . ."<sup>134</sup> At the close of this portion of dialogue the orchestra, located

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<sup>133</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 9, folder #1.

<sup>134</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 9, folder #1.

offstage in the wings, broke into "Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight"; the curtain opened revealing all the actors "standing abreast in front of their lecterns"<sup>135</sup> ready to shout the first set of headlines. These headlines, along with the lighting and live music, were used as transitional devices to unify the production. The production then went into a lengthy patriotic dialogue as indicated by the title concluding with an excerpt from the famous Walt Whitman poem, I Hear America Singing, arranged in the following manner:

- A- (QUOTING WHITMAN. MUSIC BUILDS SLOWLY UNTIL THE END)  
to conclude. . . . I announce what come after me. I  
announce mightier offspring, orators, days, and then  
depart.
- B- When America does what was promised  
When there are plentiful athletic bards, inland and  
seaboard,  
When through these States walk a hundred millions  
of superb persons,  
When breeds of most perfect mother denote America,  
Then to me my due fruition.
- C- I announce natural persons to arise, I announce justice  
triumphant,  
I announce uncompromising liberty and equality,  
I announce the justification of candor, and the justi-  
fication of pride.
- D- I announce that the identity of These States is a  
single identity only,  
I announce the Union more and more compact, I  
announce splendors and majesties to make all the  
previous politics of the earth insignificant.
- A- I announce adhesiveness--I say it shall be limitless,  
unloosen'd  
I say you shall yet find the friend you were looking  
for.

<sup>135</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 9, folder #1.

C- I announce a man or woman coming--perhaps you are  
the one,  
I announce the great individual, fluid as nature,  
chaste, affectionate, compassionate, fully armed.

A- I announce a life that shall be copious, vehement,  
  spiritual, bold,  
And I announce an old age that shall lightly meet  
  its translation.

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ALL- I hear America singing! (MUSIC SWELLS UP AND OUT)

CURTAIN

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Even though little else was found concerning this single production, it remains interesting, mainly because it seems to foreshadow production techniques Shyre was later to use in his adaptation of U.S.A. In the 1982 interview Shyre said, "I don't recall any similarities between the staging of this and U.S.A." However, he did go on to say, "I don't remember much about I Hear America Singing at all."<sup>137</sup> There were definite similarities in the use of the headlines and music as transitional devices and the theme for each show, which was America growing up and what America means to the American people. The similarity between the two scripts may have a simple explanation. For instance, they do seem to come close to each other chronologically and Shyre may have been working on both of them at the same time. Also, it may have been that instead of I Hear America Singing being

<sup>136</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 9, folder #1.

<sup>137</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 22.

an influence on U.S.A.; U.S.A. was adapted first and had an influence on I Hear America Singing. Shyre's interview did not help in this determination. What can be said is that the scripts themselves show some definite similarities with regard to style of adaptation and production technique.

### U.S.A.

U.S.A. by John Dos Passos was written as a trilogy and included novels entitled, The 42nd Parallel (1930), Nineteen Nineteen (1932), and The Big Money (1936). This trilogy was a social chronicle of the early twentieth century in the United States when the "new commercialism"<sup>138</sup> was causing a profound shift in American social values. "The story centers on the flamboyant career of an imaginary character named J. Ward Moorehouse, who turns press agency, promotion and advertising into something much more imposing called 'public relations counseling.'"<sup>139</sup>

The author of this massive work, John Roderigo Dos Passos, was born in Chicago in 1896 and graduated from Harvard in 1916. He is famous for developing a technique of interspersing "headline material and atmospheric historical background with short narrative

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<sup>138</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #8.

<sup>139</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #8.



passages."<sup>140</sup> This is definitely the style Dos Passos used in writing U.S.A. Asked about the work required to adapt three such immense novels, Shyre answered,

Well, it was quite a bit. One had to pick the story lines that one thought were most dramatic. Also, the fact that the character of Ward Moorehouse was the only character that extended through all three novels as a major character so I had to use him, but I had a great deal of help from Dos Passos, himself. We worked together quite a bit on the script, and the work wasn't simple--it was a trial and error.<sup>141</sup>

Shyre described the staging. "The use of music was very important, and I think my staging of it was extremely important where actors--sometimes within the space of five minutes--may have to play six different characters."<sup>142</sup> In the published play script of U.S.A. Shyre went into greater detail about the staging.

There are many ways the imaginative director can stage U.S.A. I am merely giving a few notes on the production I originally staged in New York, and hope they will be of some value to other directors.

I kept the cast to six actors, all of whom, with the exception of the one who played Moorehouse, play several roles. The actors were always kept on stage throughout the play, up-stage on six high stools which were at the top of a small ramp.<sup>143</sup>

Shyre described a simple backdrop which would not interfere with the visual attraction of any scenes played

<sup>140</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #8.

<sup>141</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 24.

<sup>142</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 24.

<sup>143</sup>Paul Shyre, U.S.A. (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1960), pp. 5-6.

in front of it. The only props "were three chairs and a small round table. One of the chairs had arms; the others were armless, and in the second act a fourth was brought on."<sup>144</sup> This was another element that seemed similar to I Hear America Singing, the use of the stools upstage and a table and chairs in another area onstage. Something that did change between I Hear America Singing and U.S.A. was that the script directions in the latter indicated that the table and chairs should be lightweight so that they could be moved around easily. This need for the mobility of the table and chairs was not indicated in I Hear America Singing. In the published playscript Shyre spoke of the importance of lighting and further indicated the use of music.

The use of lighting was most important as well as the proper choice of lighted areas.

The newsreels were done as follows: an appropriate tune of the period would play and as the music dropped the actors would be standing before their stools, and proclaim the larger headlines. [this sounds exactly like what was done in the opening of I Hear America Singing] For this there would be little or no special characterization. For the longer headlines or feature bits, the actor would step forward and deliver with full characterization, according to the tone of the material. Each newsreel would end in a rising finale of music and blackout.<sup>145</sup>

As Shyre has pointed out in other places, the use of music, lighting, and fluidity of staging became increasingly important to the staging of his adaptations

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<sup>144</sup>Shyre, U.S.A., pp. 5-6.

<sup>145</sup>Shyre, U.S.A., pp. 5-6.

of non-dramatic literature. Costuming for this production remained basically the same throughout the play. For the men there were simple suits and vests. These were worn with striped shirts having stiff white collars. The women in the first act wore dresses from the period 1900 to 1918. In the second act they wore clothes from the twenties.<sup>146</sup>

With this information as a background, the next step will be the documentation of the separate performances beginning with the premiere performance which, after some thought, will be documented in this study as having taken place in 1959.

#### Premiere Performance, U.S.A., 1959

Although a performance of U.S.A. at the Theatre de Lys, Tuesday, December 18, 1956, sponsored by The Greater New York Chapter of A.N.T.A., is documented, the first long run of U.S.A. came to the Martinique Theatre in 1959. Brooks Atkinson in his review dated October 29, 1959, was one of the first to point out something that was to become a high point of many of the reviews written about this performance.

In the second half of John Dos Passos' U.S.A., which was acted at the Martinique Theatre last evening, Sada Thompson tells the story of Isadora Duncan. Probably the story does not last more than five minutes. It is only one item in Mr. Dos Passos' kaleidoscope of the first thirty

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<sup>146</sup>Shyre, U.S.A., pp. 5-6.

years in the twentieth century in America. It is not the most significant item of many.

But it is the most interesting not only because Miss Thompson delivers it crisply, but also because it is a tale with a beginning, middle, and end. It combines buncombe, beauty, and success in one short interlude; it has a melodramatic conclusion. The audience listens as if it had never heard the story before.<sup>147</sup>

However, after this compliment he asked, "Why isn't the rest of U.S.A. equally engrossing?"<sup>148</sup> Further, he affirmed that the presentation should be on the evidence of the actors' and actresses' performance and the quality of the material. Since he felt the acting and the material from which the adaptation came were first-rate, Atkinson tended to blame the problems on Shyre's adaptation, saying, "But most of U.S.A. consists of bits and pieces that do not make a strong impression or state a theme."<sup>149</sup> Despite this rather mixed response to the initial presentation, Shyre's adaptation did not fade from the theatrical scene. In fact, U.S.A. went on to become one of the more popular adaptations and was later to achieve national recognition when it was produced for television. However, the next major production of U.S.A. opened two years later and brought Shyre back to one of

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<sup>147</sup> Brooks Atkinson, "Play Based on Trilogy of Dos Passos Opens," The New York Times, October 29, 1959, p. 38, col. 1.

<sup>148</sup> Atkinson, "Dos Passos," p. 38.

<sup>149</sup> Atkinson, "Dos Passos," p. 38.

his seven directing engagements with the Los Angeles Theatre Group.

Theatre Group, Los Angeles, 1961. Paul Shyre's second opportunity to direct a production for the UCLA Theatre Group was also the occasion of the West Coast premiere of U.S.A. The "dramatic revue," as it was called, opened Thursday, May 4th, and closed after a four week run on May 31, 1961. The performance was presented in the 311-seat theatre of the Humanities Building at UCLA.<sup>150</sup> The cast of six performers--John Astin, Evans Evans, Nina Foch, William Windom, Diana Lynn, and John Laselle (one review had his name spelled LaSalle)--played the forty roles necessary to the performance. They were also required to dance, sing, and act their way "through the expressionist elements of this American family portrait."<sup>151</sup> Cecil Smith, reviewer for the Los Angeles Times, also noted that the play had been a great success off-Broadway running "for a solid year."<sup>152</sup>

It was in the interview with Smith that Shyre, although he indicated enormous admiration for the Los Angeles-based Theatre Group, said "'that great danger

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<sup>150</sup>Charles Stinson, "On Stage This Week: Dos Passos' U.S.A. Will Debut Thursday," Los Angeles Times, May 2, 1961, sec. H, p. 11.

<sup>151</sup>Cecil Smith, "U.S.A.," Los Angeles Times, April 30, 1961, n.p.

<sup>152</sup>Smith, "U.S.A.," n.p.

lies in theater that is too closely aligned to universities--the danger is that we will end up with pedantic theater, classroom theater, professional theater, rather than living theater.'"<sup>153</sup> He continued analyzing the poor state of theater, saying,

The public seems to feel they're doing you a great favor by coming to see your play. Actually, it's the other way round; you're giving them the opportunity of seeing the play. Exciting theater comes from exciting audiences. I feel the audience is as much a part of the play as the actors, the scenery, everything else that's connected with it.<sup>154</sup>

As for U.S.A., Shyre said that John Dos Passos was all for trying the adaptation. Together they "telescoped" the separate stories and, as Shyre put it, "tried to do onstage what he [Dos Passos] did on paper. . . ."<sup>155</sup> Reviews for the performance were mixed, but generally positive, especially when speaking of the Isadora Duncan story. "In her recital of the life of Isadora Duncan, Nina Foch steals the show; this performance alone is worth the price of admission."<sup>156</sup> Al Greenstein continued this review saying that William Windom was also very impressive as he related the life of Rudolph Valentino and described Astin as "good" in a variety of roles

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<sup>153</sup>Smith, "U.S.A.," n.p.

<sup>154</sup>Smith, "U.S.A.," n.p.

<sup>155</sup>Smith, "U.S.A.," n.p.

<sup>156</sup>Al Greenstein, "U.S.A. Sparked by Brilliant Acting," Evening Outlook, May 12, 1961, n.p.

Further, he said, "Miss Evans plays a delightful innocent type. . . . Laselle portrays the colorless Moorehouse with perhaps too much seriousness, but the role is an empty one."<sup>157</sup> The review concluded with the observation that Lynn played her limited number of role assignments with "intelligence."<sup>158</sup>

Another reviewer, Dorothy H. Rochmis, disagreed with Atkinson's evaluation of Shyre's adaptation. She praised the source materials from which the adaptation came, then went on to assert, "And how wondrously Paul Shyre, together with Dos Passos, have now translated this voluminous work into a vital, meaningful dramatic presentation."<sup>159</sup> To date this was the largest single literary work Shyre had attempted to adapt. As has been noted before, this adaptation along with the O'Casey materials were key reasons why Shyre was approached to do some of his later adaptations.

U.S.A. Tour, 1964. In 1964 Alan Neuman and Trans-World Productions produced a U.S.A. tour under the direction of Mason and Terry Bliss of the House of Bliss Celebrity Bureau, Inc., Richmond, Virginia. The following

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<sup>157</sup>Greenstein, "U.S.A.," n.p.

<sup>158</sup>Patterson Greene, "U.S.A. Provides Engrossing Evening," Los Angeles Examiner, May 6, 1961, n.p.

<sup>159</sup>Dorothy H. Rochmis, "Theatre & Arts: John Dos Passos' U.S.A. at UCLA," The California Jewish Voice, May 5, 1961, n.p.

is a partial listing, according to the programs available,  
of the stops on this tour:

Detroit Institute of Arts Auditorium  
Detroit, Michigan.....April 3 & 4, 1964<sup>160</sup>

Buffalo Fine Arts Academy  
Buffalo, New York.....April 14-19, 1964<sup>161</sup>

Adams Memorial Theatre  
Williams College.....April 24 & 25, 1964<sup>162</sup>

Johnson Theatre  
University of New Hampshire.....April 26, 1964<sup>163</sup>

Randolph-Macon College (no date or city on program)<sup>164</sup>

Kutzman State College (no date or city on program)<sup>165</sup>

Other instances of U.S.A. being performed region-  
ally include forty-one performances produced at the Wash-  
ington Theatre Club, Washington, D.C., beginning in  
November 10, 1965. Davey Marlin-Jones directed this pro-  
duction with a cast that included John Hillerman, Sue  
Lawless, Jane Singer, John Barrett, Martin Cassidy, and

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<sup>160</sup>Information from printed program of U.S.A.,  
Detroit engagement, Detroit Institute of the Arts  
Auditorium, April 3-4, 1964.

<sup>161</sup>Information from printed program of U.S.A.,  
Buffalo engagement, Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, April 14-  
19, 1964.

<sup>162</sup>Information from printed program of U.S.A.,  
Williams College engagement, Adams Memorial theatre,  
April 24-25, 1964.

<sup>163</sup>Information from printed program of U.S.A.,  
University of New Hampshire engagement, April 26, 1964.

<sup>164</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #8.

<sup>165</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #8.



Melinda Miller.<sup>166</sup> Another production of this popular Shyre-Dos Passos adaptation was presented at the Morris Theater, Morristown, New Jersey. It ran for twenty-five performances beginning in November of 1966, under the direction of Michael Sisk.<sup>167</sup> Also, in 1966, the Best Play Series indicated nineteen performances of U.S.A. at the Francis E. Drury Theater of the Cleveland Play House which opened November 16, under the direction of Stuart Levin. There were two other regional performances of U.S.A. in 1967. One, a Philadelphia engagement, was directed by Harold Stone and included some forty-four performances in March of 1967.<sup>168</sup> The last, a Seattle production, was directed by George Vogel and ran for eight performances at the S.R.T. (Seattle Repertory Theater) Off Center Theater, November, 1967.

Television production, Public Broadcasting Network, 1971. One of the most interesting productions of U.S.A. came to American television in 1971, interesting because it afforded more people an opportunity to see a group performance of non-dramatic literature than any other medium could have, and also because it is one of the few times a Shyre adaptation had been televised. This performance removed the original literature one more step

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<sup>166</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #8.

<sup>167</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #8.

<sup>168</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #8.

from its source and/or genre. Shyre was quick to point out that he, "had absolutely nothing to do with the television production of U.S.A."<sup>169</sup> He went on to say,

My own personal feeling was--I felt it was extremely over-produced, over-use of visual effects, over-directed, and consequently I felt that what came through as a result was a sort of hodge-podge that added up to nothing, but I had nothing to do with that production.<sup>170</sup>

The critics must have seen an entirely different show because the reviews for this presentation were overwhelmingly positive. However, Shyre was the first to admit that he had limited the use of spectacle in his staging in many of the earlier productions. This may have been the major reason he felt the television production was overdone in many areas. However, Harry Harris, television critic for The Philadelphia Inquirer, echoed other reviewers when he stated:

Yesterday I was awed by the attempt to encapsule Dostoyevsky's novel The Possessed, in six 45-minute "Masterpiece Theatre" chapters, but that seems easy compared to what "Hollywood Television Theater" tried Tuesday night: THREE novels . . . in two and-a-half hours!<sup>171</sup>

He pointed out the unusual elements like newsreel montages of headlines, free-verse biographies, and author's subjective 'The Camera Eye' recollections, all of which was

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<sup>169</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 23.

<sup>170</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 23.

<sup>171</sup>Harry Harris, "Screening TV: Dos Passos' Epic U.S.A. Lives as a TV Giant with a Cast of 6," The Philadelphia Inquirer, May 5, 1971, p. 2.

accomplished with a cast of six. "What's most awesome of all, this Mission Impossible project succeeded!"<sup>172</sup>

The television production of U.S.A. aired on the Public Broadcasting Network on May 4, 1971, as a part of the larger season of television plays presented on The Hollywood Television Theater. Other productions for that season included The Andersonville Trial with William Shatner, later popularized in television and film as Captain James T. Kirk of Star Trek; Lillian Hellman's Montserrat; and Poet Game, an original work by Antony Terpiloff.<sup>173</sup> The cast for this presentation included John Davidson, a singer whose previous credits were made up mainly of "romantic leads in Walt Disney movies."<sup>174</sup> But Davidson received excellent reviews.

Top honors go to John Davidson. . . . His performance as J. Ward Moorehouse . . . has to lead to big things. It was one of the best TV performances of the year, especially his characterization of J.W. in declining years.<sup>175</sup>

Another review, this time in Variety, said of Davidson's performance, "John Davidson, as the protagonist, develops

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<sup>172</sup>Harris, "U.S.A.," p. 2.

<sup>173</sup>"Close-up Hollywood Television Theater: 'Big Fish, Little Fish,'" Advertisement printed in T.V. Guide, January 5, 1971, p. A-43.

<sup>174</sup>Rex Polier, "Around the Dials: TV at Its Best U.S.A.," The Evening Bulletin [Philadelphia], May 5, 1971, p. 76.

<sup>175</sup>Polier, "U.S.A.," p. 76.

Morehouse [sic] with effective dramatic dexterity."<sup>176</sup>

The Detroit Free Press headlined an article by Bettelou Peterson, "Joan Hackett, John Davidson Stand Out in Video U.S.A."<sup>177</sup> Praising the entire cast Peterson said, "There was no false note among them. Special praise must go to Davidson and to Miss Hackett. Davidson is best known as a smiling singer. He was a thorough surprise as J. Ward Moorehouse."<sup>178</sup> She said that Davidson progressed "genuinely from grinning eagerness to pompous stiffness and protesting age."<sup>179</sup> It should be noted that only a televised show could have received such widespread reviews for one performance; therefore, only this adaptation had so large an audience. Shyre's part in bringing this adaptation to the general public may not have been foregrounded in the television reviews, but it was because of him that many people were able to come in contact with Dos Passos' literary art.

Of Joan Hackett's performance the Oakland Tribune wrote, "her telling of Isadora Duncan's life was beautifully shaded, a small classic."<sup>180</sup> From the very beginning

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<sup>176</sup>Review, "Television Review: U.S.A.," Variety, May 5, 1971, n.p.

<sup>177</sup>Bettelou Peterson, "Joan Hackett, John Davidson Stand Out in Video U.S.A.," Detroit Free Press, May 6, 1971, n.p.

<sup>178</sup>Peterson, "Hackett, Davidson," n.p.

<sup>179</sup>Peterson, "Hackett, Davidson," n.p.

<sup>180</sup>Bob MacKenzie, "On Television: U.S.A.," Oakland Tribune, May 5, 1971, p. 20.

this segment of U.S.A. had received a great deal of attention. When Shyre was asked to account for this consistent praise, he said, "Well . . . it's beautifully written and I think . . . when it was done originally the actress who played it, Sada Thompson, did it so eloquently that it was a stand-out section of the evening."<sup>181</sup> Note that Shyre attributed this first success to the beautiful writing. He was perceptive, especially since, not only had Sada Thompson done it well in the original version, but over and over again since that time it was considered one of the high points of the production. It was also a high point when Joan Hackett performed as Duncan. Richard K. Skull added to this positive response, saying,

She delivered it [the Duncan monologue] as a society matron and began building herself a pitcher of martinis as she talked. And she talked and talked. And drank and drank. And by the time she got to the part where poor Isadora broke her neck when her long, trailing scarf became entangled in the wheel of an Italian sports car, she was swacked. It was a theatrical masterpiece.<sup>182</sup>

It must have been a very impressive performance as it is noted in almost all of the reviews.<sup>183</sup> "If one were to save the best for last, Miss Hackett would wind

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<sup>181</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 24.

<sup>182</sup>Richard K. Skull, "Grand Tour of U.S.A. on Free-Wheeling Form," The Indianapolis News, May 5, 1971, n.p.

<sup>183</sup>Dwight Newton, "U.S.A. Is Stupendous," San Francisco Examiner, May 5, 1971, p. 1.

up every critical review she is mentioned in."<sup>184</sup> Rick Du Brow's review agreed:

If there is a better actress in the land, I don't know her. In a brilliant sampling of her talent, she creates the high point of U.S.A. in a lengthy monologue in which, while mixing and sipping a martini, she tells the story of the life and career of Isadora Duncan. She is, as they say, just too much.<sup>185</sup>

Cecil Smith of the Los Angeles Times also praised Joan Hackett's performance. "No moment in the play is more effective than Joan Hackett's brilliantly moving account of the life of Isadora Duncan. . . ."<sup>186</sup> Other members of the cast were also complimented on their performances. The first was Edward G. Robinson, who read a short prologue which went as follows:

The young man walks fast by himself through the crowd that thins into the night streets; feet are tired from hours of walking; eyes greedy for warm curves of faces; mind is a beehive of hopes buzzing and stinging.

The streets are empty. People have packed into subways, and busses; gone up in elevators into apartment houses. In a show window two window dressers in their shirtsleeves are bringing out a dummy girl in a red evening dress, a few drunk bums shamle along, a sad streetwalker fidgets under an arclight. From the river comes the deep rumbling whistle of a steamboat leaving the dock. A tug hoots far away.

The young man walks by himself, fast but not fast enough, far but not far enough; he must catch the last subway, work in the cities, answer the want ads, learn the trades, live in the boarding-

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<sup>184</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #8.

<sup>185</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #8.

<sup>186</sup>Cecil Smith, "U.S.A. Adaptation on Channel 28," Los Angeles Times, May 4, 1971, sec. IV, p. 25.

houses, sleep in all the beds. One bed is not enough, one job is not enough, one life is not enough. At night, head swimming with wants, he walks by himself, alone.

It was not in the long walks that he was less alone, but in his mother's words telling about long ago, in his father's telling about when he was a boy, in the lies of kids told at school. It was the speech that clung to the ears, the link that tingled in the blood . . . U.S.A.<sup>187</sup>

Although Robinson appeared only in this opening section, several reviews praised his performance. Additional members of the cast included Shirly Knight, James Farentino, Michele Lee, and Peter Bonerz. Generally, this television production received exalted praise from critics for its ability to maintain audience interest with only a cast of six, for the incredible number of roles the performers were required to play, for the use of still photos and newsreels that were incorporated into the performance, and finally, for its clever staging and "skillfully written action and dialogue."<sup>188</sup>

Good Shepherd-Faith Church, New York City, 1972.

The next production of U.S.A. covered by this study took place in New York City in 1972. It was one production in a larger season of a group known as the City Center Acting Company. This season included:

Sheridan's School for Scandal, Paul Shyre's adaptation of Dôs Passos's U.S.A., the Jacobean tragedy Women Beware Women by Thomas Middleton and Maxim Gorky's The Lower Depths, as well as

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<sup>187</sup>Shyre, U.S.A., pp. 7-8.

<sup>188</sup>Polier, "U.S.A.," p. 76.

Brendan Behan's The Hostage and James Saunders's Next Time I'll Sing to You.<sup>189</sup>

John Houseman, who was the artistic director for the Theatre Group in 1961 when U.S.A. was presented there, was also the artistic director for this New York season. U.S.A. opened October 1, 1972, for three performances. The repertory season ran only a month and closed October 28 of that same year.

If the television production of U.S.A. received reviews some considered overly complimentary, the New York Times review of this production definitely provided a significant "leveling" effect. Mel Gussow started his review describing the goal or purpose of the City Center Acting Company as the performance of "classics" which afford the audience an opportunity to see how the young actors and actresses measure up to the material they attempt to perform. Of U.S.A. Gussow said that it was not a matter of the actors and actresses coming up to the material of the play, but rather "a matter of determining how far the play fell short of the actors [and actresses]." <sup>190</sup> He went on to fault the adaptation as diminutive, and not at all like Shyre's fine adaptations of O'Casey. He commented that U.S.A. was filled with

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<sup>189</sup> John Willis, ed., Theatre World (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1972), p. 134.

<sup>190</sup> Mel Gussow, review of U.S.A., The New York Times, October 2, 1972, p. 43, col. 1.



characters who were nothing more than cliches and concluded, "If you see only one of the plays in this excellent company's repertoire--and I suggest that you see many --this is not the one to see."<sup>191</sup>

Joseph Jefferson Theatre Company, New York City, 1976. On the 200th birthday of the United States of America the Little Church Around the Corner presented a revival of U.S.A. as a part of their larger season. That season included Jack Fallon Faretheewell, Rip Van Winkle, The Well, Johnny Belinda, and Skaters. The Joseph Jefferson Theatre Company performed only, "American plays, both revivals and new works largely drawn from their playwright's workshop."<sup>192</sup>

One final production of U.S.A. should be mentioned, although no information about the production has been found except that the performance took place at the Arena Theater in Houston, Texas, November 15, 1971.

#### Drums Under the Windows

The third novel in the autobiographical series written by Sean O'Casey was Drums Under the Windows. This novel related the story of young Johnny Casside (O'Casey) as he learned the hard lessons of manual labor with pick

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<sup>191</sup>Gussow, review, p. 43.

<sup>192</sup>Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., ed., The Best Plays of 1975-1976 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1963), p. 351.

and shovel, the beauty of literary works by Shakespeare and George Bernard Shaw, the pain of a pauper's funeral for his sister, and the ever-present poverty, sickness and death of the slums of Dublin. "The family portraits are beautifully done. Nowhere in literature is there a deeper, more moving picture of the life of a slum family cursed with the direst poverty. . . ." <sup>193</sup> This was Shyre's last adaptation of the prose literature of Sean O'Casey. Although many people have thought of Shyre as the man who popularized O'Casey in this country, Shyre disagreed. "I've never felt that I, in any way, was an authority on the life and works of Sean O'Casey, although earlier in my career I was able to adapt three of his autobiographical works." However, Shyre did mention several other dramatic productions by O'Casey he had worked on.

I was involved as an actor and co-producer with two of his plays: Purple Dust and Cock-a-Doodle Dandy. The one claim one might make to success is that Purple Dust ran over a year at the Cherry Lane and, as far as I know, was the longest run of any O'Casey play anywhere in the world. . . . <sup>194</sup>

He said that while many people at the time thought he was trying to popularize O'Casey he was really only doing what he wanted to do or as he put it,

. . . something I felt for and, as I say, to this day [1982] I never thought of myself as an authority and I have done nothing with O'Casey

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<sup>193</sup>Horace Reynolds, review of Drums Under the Windows, Weekly Book Review, May 12, 1946, p. 2.

<sup>194</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 20.

after the production of Drums Under the Windows, which goes back to 1960.<sup>195</sup>

Premiere performance, Drums Under the Windows, 1960

Drums Under the Windows opened in New York City at the Cherry Lane Theatre in Greenwich Village, October 13, 1960, and closed January 15, 1961, after a run of 109 or 110 performances, depending on the source of information on the subject. Shyre's own production company, the Torquay Company (Torquay was the place where O'Casey lived in England), produced the run. Later that same year the New York Times explained,

The Torquay Company (Mr. Shyre and Robert Rines) has leased the Mermaid for five years. The company and Ruth Kaner are sponsoring Diff'rent but Mr. Shyre stressed it was only the beginning. He is abubble with plans--for a non-resident repertory company, a professional workshop, a matinee series, you name it.<sup>196</sup>

The possibilities sounded good but in a little over one year the New York Times July 3, 1962, headlined an article by Louis Calta, "Shyre Abandons Repertory Unit: Torquay Company Dropped for Lack of Support."<sup>197</sup>

This latest adaptation had several characteristics that were different from previous productions based on the works of O'Casey. The earlier adaptations had been staged

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<sup>195</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 21.

<sup>196</sup>Robert Shelton, "O'Casey to O'Neill," The New York Times, October 15, 1961, sec. II, p. 3, col. 7.

<sup>197</sup>Louis Calta, "Shyre Abandons Repertory Unit," The New York Times, July 3, 1962, p. 13.

in the basic "readers theatre" style with stools, stands, and other characteristics of that style. This latest production "actually was staged. On stage left, the character, the actor played the older O'Casey who was sitting at a desk with his cap on. . . ." <sup>198</sup> Whereas the previous O'Casey productions had tended to "distance" the author from the performance, this presentation indicated more clearly than ever the narrator as O'Casey. The inference may have been there all the time in the other adaptations, but in this one O'Casey was made even more concrete with a pipe, glasses, turtleneck, and "cap" as Shyre indicated. Shyre further said that,

Martin Green, who was at the time known for his Gilbert and Sullivan performances, played the older O'Casey who was sort of looking back and commenting and he at times would get up from his desk and join the scenes, commenting on what was happening. <sup>199</sup>

This description sounds very much like a style of performance often called "chamber theatre," which features the narrator, whereas the other productions kept the narrator physically out of the scene. Further, although the narrator in the first two O'Casey adaptations may have been the author "now" looking back on his life "then," he did not intrude into any scenes except, at times, when he injected an opinion or colored a descriptive passage.

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<sup>198</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 18.

<sup>199</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 19.

Costumes for this production were "very simple. The narrator and the two utility actors usually wore turtleneck sweaters with some kind of Harris tweed jacket over them; the women both had shawls . . . and that was basically it."<sup>200</sup> This performance included more setting, props, and costumes than earlier presentations of the O'Casey works. Shyre said these changes in staging were based on the literary style of this novel.

Since some of the material . . . had an almost surrealistic quality such as the section on Bernard Shaw, it was important that through the use of fluid movement . . . very effective lighting . . . effective music, that this be more of a fluid piece.<sup>201</sup>

Shyre concluded, "In other words, there was not the usual lectern and stools as we used in the previous two productions."<sup>202</sup> The furniture used in this production was moved around by the actors.

The three walls of the stage should have a brick-like appearance [in the original performance at the Cherry Lane Theatre the back brick-wall of the theatre itself was used], with a fence running across the rear section; one that the actors may sit on or walk around, if necessary. There is a lamp post at L. of the fence.<sup>203</sup>

The notes on "Production" found in the published play script further indicate that portraits of G. B. Shaw and

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<sup>200</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 21.

<sup>201</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 19.

<sup>202</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 19.

<sup>203</sup>Paul Shyre, Drums Under the Windows (Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1962), p. 4.

W. B. Yeats were hung on the right and left of the pro-cenium. The cast for this adaptation remained small, as in the other adaptations, five actors and two actresses.

The first pages of dialogue are not, as was true in the other adaptations, divided in a manner so that all performers share the beginning narration. The Drums narrator (O'Casey) went through a long paragraph of narration and then immediately into the dialogue.<sup>204</sup> The script indicated sixty-two sound cues and gave no indication of lighting cues. Again, because of all the movement required in this production, the individual spots for each stool area were done away with and the lighting involved the larger areas of the stage.

Of the opening at the Cherry Lane Theatre, Howard Taubman said, "Words that brood and laugh and sing cascaded from the stage of the Cherry Lane Theatre last night,"<sup>205</sup> and he commented that a New York theater-goer would not find "anything more eloquent in any theatre in town."<sup>206</sup> He found it most interesting that O'Casey, a playwright by vocation, should have so much of his prose, which Taubman termed "more poetic than many poets,"

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<sup>204</sup>Shyre, Drums Under the Windows, p. 5.

<sup>205</sup>Howard Taubman, "Drums Under the Windows," The New York Times, October 14, 1960, p. 26.

<sup>206</sup>Taubman, "Drums," p. 26.

produced in the theatre.<sup>207</sup> Further he credited Shyre's trust of the literature and his adaptation:

It is idle to pretend that every subject is dramatized. But there is a kind of exhilarating drama in the O'Casey's [sic] very gift of gab. Mr. Shyre has wisely placed his reliance on it. Using a simple, spare setting designed by Eldon Elder, he has moved and grouped his cast ingeniously. He has not encumbered it with props, letting O'Casey's words evoke the needed images.<sup>208</sup>

This statement in the New York Times did not, however, change the observations that were made above. The presentation, as is evident from the prop lists and descriptions of setting, was, in comparison to the earlier O'Casey productions, of a "higher definition." The simplicity spoken of in the article is relative and probably means the critic was comparing this to a fully-staged Broadway production, in which case it would have been considered simple.

Fernwood Theatre, Los Angeles, 1966. Although Shyre indicated that "Drums Under the Windows did not tour,"<sup>209</sup> it was presented in Los Angeles at the Fernwood Theatre in 1966. This Los Angeles production was presented by Edward Ludlum's workshop theatre about March 22, 1966. The play review by James Powers for the Hollywood Reporter did not give the exact date of the performance. The review did, however, point out numerous

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<sup>207</sup>Taubman, "Drums," p. 26.

<sup>208</sup>Taubman, "Drums," p. 26.

<sup>209</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 19.

problems the reviewer saw in the performance. First, Powers indicated he felt the adaptation was not as satisfactory as a staged drama as the other O'Casey prose materials had been, or possibly the failure was due to the poor direction by Ludlum. Second, he felt the whole cast, or director, or both "could do with some research into Irish pronunciations."<sup>210</sup> Powers did point out moments when individual cast members seemed to be doing a better job with the material, but on the whole he clearly felt that since these people were in a workshop situation, they should have taken advantage of it and sharpened up their tools. "Employment of tools can come when they have learned how to use them. That is the purpose of a workshop."<sup>211</sup>

Again, it should be emphasized that Shyre has said the key to all of the O'Casey productions was, "they were done without much artifice. . . . The only thing intruding in the evening was the use of flute, the singing, and expert lighting."<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>210</sup>James Powers, "Play Review: Drums Under the Window [sic]," The Hollywood Reporter, March 22, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>211</sup>Powers, "Drums," p. 3.

<sup>212</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 21.



Yeats and Company

Some of Paul Shyre's adaptations resulted from special invitations, no doubt because of his established reputation as an adapter-director. He might never have created the script Yeats and Company except that in 1965 he was asked to replace Carroll O'Connor as the director of a Los Angeles production to be taken from the works of William Butler Yeats entitled, Yeats and Company. O'Connor had been "forced to bow out due to a conflicting commitment."<sup>213</sup> He had to leave Los Angeles for Chicago and the filming of a new CBS pilot in which he was to star. This may have been the Carroll O'Connor who was later popularized in the television show, All In The Family, as Archie Bunker. "With Mr. O'Connor's departure from the Yeats' project, The Theatre Group wished to give Mr. Shyre full artistic freedom in building his own distinctive directoral concept of the Yeats production."<sup>214</sup> Shyre's freedom extended to basic changes in what had been planned for the evening. As Shyre put it,

At the time there were three one act plays of Yeats being rehearsed out there, directed by Carroll O'Connor, and for some reason he had to leave to do a film or something and Gordon Davidson, who was at the time the head of The Theatre Group and who still is, asked me if I would come

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<sup>213</sup>Information from printed press release of Yeats and Company, Los Angeles engagement, UCLA Humanities Building Auditorium, October 20-December 4, 1965.

<sup>214</sup>Printed press release, Yeats, Los Angeles, 1965.

out and do an evening, an adaptation of the works of Yeats' prose, poetry, and drama, and I put something together which finally came out as Yeats and Company. . . . One actor played Yeats and I relied on his [Yeats] autobiographical material a great deal as well as a great deal of his poetry. . . . There was a musical instrument, I think it was a harp, and there was some music--singing--put in as well.<sup>215</sup>

A memo put out by Dick Kitzrow explained that the University of California at Los Angeles was commemorating the Yeats centenary with a production of selected materials drawn from the poetry, prose, and drama of "the legendary Irish writer and wit."<sup>216</sup> The show opened Monday, October 18, 1965, with an invitational preview. A second of these previews was held the next night and the public opening came on October 20, 1965. As the review by Margaret Harford indicated, Shyre did drop one of the one-act play sections and inserted more poetry and prose.

U.C.L.A.'s Theatre Group pays homage to William Butler Yeats, late poet and dramatist of this century . . . in a dramatized reading, Yeats and Company, comprising samples of the Celtic bard's enduring prose and also inserting two one-act plays.

In this massive epitaph to Yeats (1865-1965) during his centenary year, director Paul Shyre and a sensitive company of seven evoke the poet's splendid lyricism, his strong nationalism still fresh in Irish hearts, and glimpses of his personal life--marriage, parenthood and abiding interest in mysticism and occult studies.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>215</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 7.

<sup>216</sup>Printed press release, Yeats, Los Angeles, 1965.

<sup>217</sup>Shyre Collection.

The lengthy review explained how the Theatre Group was continuing their tradition of producing performances of this sort, e.g., Spoon River Anthology and Brecht on Brecht. Further, the reviewer indicated that this type of performance might not be for everyone, but aimed at a special audience and was "not everyone's elixir."<sup>218</sup> Shyre and many other people interested in the production of either professional or non-professional presentations of non-dramatic materials would disagree with this statement. Shyre has indicated that all people who could enjoy theatre could relate to this form of theatrical production if they would allow themselves to suspend their presuppositions about what they believed "theatre" should be.

Murray Matheson played W. B. Yeats in this production. As Shyre said, he stood at a lectern telling, in narrative fashion, about his first meeting with J. M. Synge, the playwright who wrote Playboy of the Western World or other stories related to his last American tour. Shyre described the staging for this production as "rather fluid."<sup>219</sup> The other six players were seated on a "rostrum,"<sup>220</sup> each taking multiple roles as "the voices of his [Yeats'] life."<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>218</sup>Shyre Collection.

<sup>219</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 8.

<sup>220</sup>Shyre Collection.

<sup>221</sup>Shyre Collection.

Digsby Diehl, staff writer for the U.C.L.A. Bruin, was impressed with this Theatre Group production of the works of Yeats.

If the U.C.L.A. Theatre Group were to do no more than present their fascinating illustrated lecture on the prose and poetry of William Butler Yeats they would be ably fulfilling their function in the multi-versity community,

but "they also include two one-act plays by Yeats, Purgatory and The Words Upon the Window-Pane."<sup>222</sup> Diehl said it made for exciting theatre and the "resultant evening is a refreshing pleasure."<sup>223</sup> This review also devoted space to what he chose to call "the presentational" part of the program.

Murray Matheson plays the white-haired Yeats with facility. Even the fragmentary presentation of Yeats' years with the Abbey Theater are enjoyable. The readings of Lady Gregory, Maud Gonne, Oscar Wilde, Sean O'Casey, John M. Synge, the Fay brothers, and others are ably performed by John Crowther, Patricia Cutts, Brenda Dillon, Will Kuluva, Diana Maddox, and Helene Winston. Paul Shyre is to be congratulated for his tasteful job of selection and adaptation of Yeats' materials, as well as a fine piece of direction.<sup>224</sup>

The Variety review for this production was another case of the reviewer indicating that this entertainment might not be for the general public.

Theatre Group has, since its inception, been particularly successful with the reading style of

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<sup>222</sup>Digsby Diehl, "On Stage," U.C.L.A. Daily Bruin, October 27, 1965, p. 7.

<sup>223</sup>Diehl, "On Stage," p. 7.

<sup>224</sup>Diehl, "On Stage," p. 7.

theatre. This one, aside from the playlets, is strictly poetry. While it is penetrating and beautifully presented, the appeal will remain to lovers of language.<sup>225</sup>

It was also in the Variety review that Walter Starkie, then professor-in-residence at U.C.L.A., was first mentioned. Starkie was the director of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin from 1927-1942, and on the opening night of Yeats and Company he gave what was described as a colorful introduction to the performance.<sup>226</sup>

Patterson Greene, writing for the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, said,

Rescued from neglect that descended about 20 years ago with the suddenness of a change of bill at the Kremlin, William Butler Yeats is rightly restored to the public eye and ear by the Theater Group. The medium of reactivation is called Yeats and Company. Its opening in the Humanities Building on the U.C.L.A. campus last Saturday was hailed by an audience larger in its approbation than in its number.<sup>227</sup>

Greene noted that the costumes were authentic for the period. The unpublished play script details a simple staging for the production.

The stage is bare, but for various props and costumes and bits of scenery scattered about. Upstage center is a large blackboard upon which is scrawled in large chalk writing:

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<sup>225</sup>Review, "Yeats and Company: U.C.L.A. Humanities Hall," Variety, October 25, 1965, n.p.

<sup>226</sup>Diehl, "On Stage," p. 7.

<sup>227</sup>Patterson Greene, "Group Enlivens Yeats' Plays, Poetry, Prose," Los Angeles Herald-Examiner, October 25, 1965, n.p.

W. B. YEATS  
1865-1965  
IRELAND

Seven actors make their way upon stage. One of them dressed as Yeats goes to the side of the stage and remains there separate from the others. Special light upon him. The other six are dressed in various costumes, and as they enter some introductory music is played. As they speak, the light on Yeats slowly comes on brighter. NARRATOR I moves forward and addresses the audience.<sup>228</sup>

This description of the opening indicated Shyre's staging followed closely the staging he had used for Drums Under the Windows, except that in this instance there seemed to be somewhat less movement and the narrator, Yeats, did not intrude physically in the scenes being played by the other players. However, it is evident from the unpublished script that there was interaction between Yeats and the others. The opening lines of the script show this interaction:

NARRATOR I

(Pompously) The works of William Butler Yeats have not, generally speaking, been regarded by modern critics. They have tended to judge the earlier ones as classics and sentimental, and the later ones as barbarous, remote, theatrically impractical, or merely cosmic.

YEATS

(Interrupting) I believe myself to be a dramatist. I desire to show events and not merely tell them. And two of my best friends were won for me by my plays. . . .<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>228</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 4, folder 10, p. 1.

<sup>229</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 4, folder 10, p. 1.

After this a second narrator, as he is called, began another bit of dialogue which sounded a lot like a college lecture. Again, Yeats commented on it and so on through a third narrator and a comment, moving then into some of Yeats' letters, poetry, prose, etc.

Yeats and Company was generally very well received by the Los Angeles critics. However, the production at U.C.L.A. and a subsequent limited tour of California were the only times it has been performed.

#### A Whitman Portrait

The next production Shyre did was the second clear instance of a commission resulting from his reputation for the adaptation of non-dramatic literary materials. In 1965 Paul Shyre was asked by the Nassau Community College to do an adaptation of non-dramatic literature taken from the writings of the outstanding American poet-author, Walt Whitman. "I was asked," Shyre said, "by the college--they commissioned me--to put together this script, which was to be produced at the college." Robert T. Hazzard of Wayne State University described this newest adaptation in the following manner.

Shyre follows a two-act form which is broken into 'Youth and the Civil War' and 'Take My Leaves, America.' The first act deals quickly with Whitman's youth in New York with word images of the docks, the people, and a young man's yearnings and thoughts. By using three players simply described as The Man, The Young Man, and The Woman, Shyre is able to have various characters in Whitman's life portrayed and often used as foils to

the complex nature of the leading subject. . . . Shyre closes his first act with tragedy at the Ford Theatre. This final speech of the act is perhaps the most moving journalistic reporting of that event ever printed.<sup>230</sup>

Hazzard went on to credit Shyre's accurate perception of what he was doing when he called the play a "portrait." He agreed with the use of the term, saying,

The play is primarily actionless in the sense of performing physical activities to tell the story. The play might best be categorized as material for the ever growing popularity of readers theatre. The demands made upon the actor playing Whitman are primarily vocal.<sup>231</sup>

This adaptation was the first time that Shyre had the opportunity to work with James Whitmore, who was later to star in Shyre's successful one-man show based on the writings of Will Rogers. Shyre said of this relationship, "It was a very pleasant association which went on to his playing Will Rogers for me." Shyre recalled, "I remember the actress, Barbara Barrie, was in it. As I recall, at the time she was in her eighth month of pregnancy, which somehow seemed to work very well with doing the works of Walt Whitman."<sup>232</sup>

Whereas some of the other premiere performances were difficult to document, A Whitman Portrait was a commission and not previewed out of town or read for a group

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<sup>230</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #11.

<sup>231</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #11.

<sup>232</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 25.



like The Poetry Center, who had sponsored the initial readings of the O'Casey materials. The first performance of this production was clearly credited in the Dramatists Play Service published script.

Premiere performance, Nassau Community College, 1965

Walt Whitman was born May 31, 1819, in Huntington, Long Island; therefore, it did not seem at all unusual that over one hundred years later a Long Island college would begin a Walt Whitman Festival. Nassau Community College initiated such a festival in 1965. Paul Shyre was selected to adapt and direct "a dramatic presentation for the college's first Walt Whitman Festival. . . ." <sup>233</sup> Some newspapers said that Shyre was a co-director of this production, but he said that he directed the production while serving as chairman of the college's theatre department. Dr. Wesley J. Jensby "worked with me as a producer on it. As I recall, his contribution was done effectively as a producer, but the actual work of directing . . . was myself." <sup>234</sup> It should be noted here that the college chose Shyre to orchestrate this first year of what they hoped would be a tradition. The initial impression the Festival would make was very important to its future success. In other words, they must have had a great deal of confidence in Shyre to allow him to

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<sup>233</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #11.

<sup>234</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 25.

be so very much involved in the beginning of a Nassau Community College tradition. His past record obviously added to his overall credibility.

The production itself was adapted in a dramatic narrative and folk-song form. Shyre's adaptation involved his going through some fifty books about Whitman, the eight editions of Leaves of Grass, letters, and other materials to form his "narrative."<sup>235</sup> The final script included selections "from the major body of the poet's works: I Sing the Body Electric, Song of Myself, Drums Taps, and Respondez."<sup>236</sup> Four professional performers were used in the major roles of A Whitman Portrait while a student played the remaining part, The Boy, which was not included in the later productions. Dr. Jensby explained that the production was

. . . the largest and most expensive theatrical undertaking we've ever undertaken here. . . . This puts us right in the forefront of the movement to bring together the professional and educational theater, too long at opposites with each other.<sup>237</sup>

He went on to say that this project would be culturally significant for Long Island, especially since Long Island was the birthplace of Whitman. Speaking of Shyre and why he was commissioned to do the honors for this first

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<sup>235</sup>Stuart W. Little, "Theatre News: Whitman Role to James Whitmore," The New York Herald Tribune, April 23, 1965, n.p.

<sup>236</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #11.

<sup>237</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #11.

festival, Dr. Jensby declared,

Shyre is best known for his adaptations of Sean O'Casey works. He also adapted John Dos Passos' novel, U.S.A., which ran for a year Off-Broadway and received several awards. Naturally he came to mind immediately when we decided on this project.<sup>238</sup>

As a part of the contractual agreement Shyre was given all rights to the production after its Nassau Community College run, May 11 through May 23, 1965.

In an article written by Bob Micklin, James Whitmore spoke of Shyre's ability to direct and revise while in rehearsal.

In this play, actors have two separate problems: long speaking parts and some fast-paced interplay. . . . As it has gone along, we've made some impromptu revisions--deletions really--for the sake of clarification. Mr. Shyre has been very understanding about the whole thing. Since the script is composed entirely of Whitman's poetry you have to overcome the tendency toward simple recitation. Mr. Shyre has done a wonderful job.<sup>239</sup>

The cast also included Barbara Barrie, "who had the Anne Bancroft role in The Miracle Worker sent abroad for the State Department. . . ."<sup>240</sup> Another of her accomplishments was the winning of the prestigious "best-actress award" at the Cannes Film Festival for her role in One Potato, Two Potato. Barrie played all the women's roles in the Whitman evening. Wayne Maxwell, a veteran of two other Shyre productions, Pictures in the Hallway

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<sup>238</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #11.

<sup>239</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #11.

<sup>240</sup>Little, "Whitman," n.p.

and I Knock at the Door, played the second man in the Whitman production. Maxwell, a recipient of the first Ford Foundation acting grant at Nina Vance's Houston Alley Theatre, went on to recreate his role in A Whitman Portrait for the New York and London productions. John Leighton, another professional actor, and Sam Carville, a student actor from the college, were also members of the cast.

The stage setting included a backdrop "possibly showing New York City and Brooklyn skylines as they appeared in the 1890's. On stage left, a single period desk with oil lamp--books and papers on it. Behind it an armchair."<sup>241</sup> This Shyre adaptation also made use of music which was written by Robert Rines, who wrote original music for several of the Shyre adaptations. The musical score for Whitman appears in the back of the script from Dramatists Play Service.

Gramercy Arts Theatre, New York City, 1966. The year following the Whitman Festival at Nassau Community College a production of A Whitman Portrait came to New York City. The production opened October 11, 1966, at the Gramercy Arts Theatre and closed on Sunday, December 11, 1966, after seventy-two or seventy-three performances, depending on the source. The cast for this production

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<sup>241</sup>Paul Shyre, A Whitman Portrait (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1967), p. 4.

was reduced to four performers. Alexander Scourby replaced James Whitmore in the role of Walt Whitman, because as Shyre put it, Whitmore "had several film commitments at the time and was unable."<sup>242</sup> Carolyn Coates, Alan Mixon, and Wayne Maxwell made up the remainder of the cast. Maxwell was the only cast member who had done the Nassau Community College production. Mixon, however, had worked in a Shyre adaptation before. He toured colleges in the spring of 1965, with Shyre's adaptation of Pictures in the Hallway.<sup>243</sup> The producers for A Whitman Portrait were Ira Skutch and Allan Frank. Both of these men had backgrounds in production, but it was Skutch's first time to back a "legitimate" theatrical production.<sup>244</sup> Frank had produced several Broadway shows and motion pictures including, "The Eddie Duchin Story" and "On the Waterfront."<sup>245</sup> He also co-produced the college tour of Pictures in the Hallway in the spring of 1965, mentioned above.

In his New York Times review on October 12, 1966, Thomas Lask called the production,

. . . a sketch of what Whitman, his personality and his life were like. The passionate faith in man, the buoyant egalitarianism, the humanitarianism,

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<sup>242</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 26.

<sup>243</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #11.

<sup>244</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #11.

<sup>245</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #11.

the mystic and prophet, the man who affirmed the body as well as the soul, who saw old age and death part of life, the great yeasayer are all celebrated in Mr. Shyre's dramatization.<sup>246</sup>

The Lask review continued to praise Shyre for not having "flinched from a certain amount of bombast, a certain inflated romanticism that was also a great part of the poet's character."<sup>247</sup> The setting for this production was designed by Eldon Elder and consisted of a "high, timbered room with a potbelly stove, an armchair and wooden pillars."<sup>248</sup> A picture of this setting, appearing on the first page of the Dramatists Play Service script shows a few more tables than these mentioned in the review.

Open Space Theatre, London, England, 1969. Nineteen sixty nine marked the 150th anniversary of the birth of Walt Whitman. To celebrate the occasion the Open Space Theatre presented a limited run of Shyre's A Whitman Portrait. The cast for this London production included the same people who created the roles for the New York City run--Scourby, Coates, Maxwell, and Mixon. Paul Shyre directed the production in London following its "successful run in New York City and on tour in America."<sup>249</sup> The American tour mentioned in the London press

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<sup>246</sup>Thomas Lask, "Dramatization Arrives at Gramercy Arts," The New York Times, October 12, 1966, p. 37, col. 1.

<sup>247</sup>Lask, "Dramatization," p. 37, col. 1.

<sup>248</sup>Lask, "Dramatization," p. 37, col. 1.

<sup>249</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #11.

release must have occurred between December, 1966, and April, 1969, although no other documentation of this tour has been located.

In his review for The Daily Telegraph, Sean Day-Lewis pointed out that one of Shyre's major problems "was to decide whether to present the shaggy, untamed, sensual Whitman that was his poetic persona or to rest content with the quiet, gentle, courteous Whitman of real life."<sup>250</sup> Day-Lewis went on to say, "He (Shyre) solved this with a portrait somewhere between these two extremes, with a little of the poet-messiah thrown in."<sup>251</sup> And concluded, "It is an acceptable compromise."<sup>252</sup> Earlier in his review Day-Lewis described the production.

Poetry, verse, prosody, and prose have been stirred together to make a rare feast of rhetoric, sentiment, and mysticism, which the uninitiated may find a little indigestible. But it very much repays the careful listening it demands and on balance is likely to make new friends for Whitman's most famous book, Leaves of Grass.<sup>253</sup>

Other London reviews in Stage and the Evening Standard tended toward simply announcing the production and recounting its previous runs rather than evaluating and describing the London run. But the article in the

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<sup>250</sup> Sean Day-Lewis, "Fine Feast of Whitman," The Daily Telegraph [London], April 17, 1969, n.p.

<sup>251</sup> Day-Lewis, "Whitman," n.p.

<sup>252</sup> Day-Lewis, "Whitman," n.p.

<sup>253</sup> Day-Lewis, "Whitman," n.p.

Evening Standard included three interesting paragraphs that related Shyre's experience and future plans, interesting because they were one of the few places where we find that Henry Fonda was originally scheduled to do the one-man show, Will Rogers' U.S.A. This article mentioned Shyre's other work:

Mr. Shyre is experienced at this kind of writing. He did the same thing with the life and thought of Sean O'Casey in his play Pictures in the Hallway; and with Will Rogers in a one-man play soon to be produced in America starring Henry Fonda.

But now he thinks he has come to the point of shedding his idols and writing his own material instead of adapting what others have written.

He has recently completed a play of his own, entitled The President is Dead about the assassination of Lincoln. It is going to be put on at Ford's Theatre in Washington where the assassination actually happened.<sup>254</sup>

Actually, as will be documented later, The President is Dead was not produced at Ford's Theatre in Washington because Lincoln had been assassinated there, and also because the production was scheduled close to the time of the Kennedy assassination and the investigation that followed.

The Brooklyn Center, Long Island University, 1970.

Ira Skutch and Allan Frank produced a revival of A Whitman Portrait at The Brooklyn Center of Long Island University on Friday, October 23, 1970, at 2:00 in the afternoon. Whether this performance was a part of a

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<sup>254</sup>Review, "Portrait of Whitman: Shedding His Idols," Evening Standard [London], April 16, 1969, n.p.



larger tour has not been ascertained. The cast consisted of James Seacrest, Wayne Maxwell, Sylvia Gassell and one of the producers himself, Allan Frank.

In summary, the key to the production style of these early shows was simplicity. The Theatre of Mr. Poe, I Knock at the Door, and Pictures in the Hallway seem to share a "readers theatre" approach to the staging, while I Hear America Singing, U.S.A., Drums Under the Windows, and Yeats and Company increase the physical movement and heighten the definition of the production style until in A Whitman Portrait we begin to see clear elements of Robert Breen's idea of chamber theatre. Shyre directed all of these early productions at one time or another and performed in some, all but I Hear America Singing, U.S.A., Yeats and Company, and A Whitman Portrait. I Hear America Singing, Yeats and Company, and A Whitman Portrait were all works that Shyre was asked to do based on the reputation he had made for himself working on the earlier adaptations, particularly the first two O'Casey adaptations, I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway. It was also during this early period that he was recognized as one of the theater's most promising young talents as the 1958 recipient of the prestigious Brandeis Creative Arts Award. Other recognition during this time included an Obie for U.S.A., a Vernon Rice Drama Desk Award, and a nomination for a Tony. All of the experiences described

above, plus other work in the theatre, laid the foundation for the next equally productive period from 1967-1981.

## Chapter 2

### LATER PRODUCTIONS: 1967-1981

Shyre created six productions of non-dramatic literature from 1967 to 1981. Three of the productions, New York, New York, The President Is Dead, and Ah, Men are examples of group performance. The remaining three works were one-person shows including, Will Rogers' U.S.A., An Unpleasant Evening with H. L. Mencken (also called Blasts and Bravos: An Evening with H. L. Mencken), and Paris Was Yesterday. These three one-person shows by Shyre were part of a large number of presentations of this type that have been produced in recent years. One article termed these shows "monodrama," and offered the following examples:

1. James Whitmore as Teddy Roosevelt
2. James Whitmore as Will Rogers
3. James Whitmore as Harry Truman
4. David Wayne as H. L. Mencken
5. Paul Shyre as H. L. Mencken
6. Hal Holbrook as Mark Twain
7. James Earl Jones as Paul Robeson
8. Julie Harris as Emily Dickinson
9. Robert Vaughn as F.D.R.
10. Henry Fonda as Clarence Darrow
11. Jerry Rockwood as Edgar Allen Poe
12. Emlyn Williams as Charles Dickens
13. Emlyn Williams as Dylan Thomas
14. Roy Dotrice as John Aubrey
15. Eileen Heckart as Eleanor Roosevelt
16. Dorothy Stickney as Edna St. Vincent Millay
17. Vincent Price as Oscar Wilde
18. Celeste Holm as Janet Flanner
19. Cavada Humphrey as Elizabeth I

20. Robert Sacchi as Humphrey Bogart
21. Donal Donnelly as G. B. Shaw
22. Branwell Fletcher as G. B. Shaw
23. Max Adrian as G. B. Shaw
24. Max Adrian in a "Gilbert and Sullivan"  
one-man show
25. Michael MacLiammoir as Yeats
26. Michael MacLiammoir in The Importance of  
Being Oscar
27. Paul Tripp as Will Rogers<sup>1</sup>

It was Shyre himself who said that he was very impressed with Emlyn Williams' one-person show on Charles Dickens. But, as shown by the lengthy listing above, this type of performance has made an impression on many others and has become a very popular type of theatre that would seem to merit further study. Shyre's first contribution to the genre was the production of Will Rogers' U.S.A.

#### Will Rogers' U.S.A.

The first public news of Shyre's work on a script about the life and writings of Will Rogers appeared in the New York Times, October 13, 1968. The Lewis Funke article pointed out Shyre's past successes with the O'Casey works and his more recent work, A Whitman Portrait. Further, Funke indicated that Shyre's project had "the advantage of years of research by Spota (George Spota, one of the producers of the project), who owns the rights and who collected just about all the available

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<sup>1</sup>Shyre Collection, Mugar Memorial Library, Boston University, Box 11, folder #12 or Shyre Collection, Mugar Memorial Library, Boston University, Box 14, Env. #8/

material."<sup>2</sup> The article suggested that Will Rogers should "stir memories for those who were young in the 20's and 30's."<sup>3</sup> This article also includes a brief biographical sketch of William Penn Adair Rogers and his very interesting life,

He was a fellow who was part Cherokee Indian on both sides, was born near Claremore in Indian territory (now Oklahoma), grew up to become an artist with a lariat, and did rope-spinning tricks that dazzled spectators all over the world. But, best of all, he could tell jokes--not those Joe Miller variations but, instead homespun, horse-sense comments on politics, politicians, foreign affairs, and just plain human beings.

He received \$3,000 a week (when taxes were lower) to appear in the Ziegfeld Follies, became a star in Hollywood and on radio, and wrote a column that was syndicated in 350 newspapers with a readership of 40,000,000. He got to be called, 'The poor man's Plato' and 'The Poet Lariat.' When he died in an airplane crash in 1935, his passing was said to have saddened kings and presidents, cowhands and patrons of the arts--just about everyone.<sup>4</sup>

Funke's article said that Shyre had gone through what seemed like tons of material to create a script that would be representative of this popular American entertainer and yet pertinent to the modern audiences that would be seeing the one-person show. Shyre further indicated in the article that the production would not be the kind of staged reading he had done with such materials

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<sup>2</sup>Lewis Funke, "News of the Rialto: Will Rogers Recalled," The New York Times, October 13, 1968, section D, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Funke, "Will Rogers," section D, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Funke, "Will Rogers," section D, p. 1.

in the past, but rather a fully staged production. Shyre has commented that one-person shows seem to demand more complete stage settings, settings more "highly defined," because "you're dealing with a specific character who's in a specific environment."<sup>5</sup> Shyre gave as another example his H. L. Mencken show, covered later in this study. About the Will Rogers show he said,

In the case of Will Rogers, the setting was very simple. One had to show the American Indian influence, so we studied his home, his original home in Santa Monica, California, together with his home in Oklahoma, and we tried to get a set that had a sort of Navajo influence. It was very simple. There was an animal skin rug on the floor, there was a harness lying up on a play horse [saw horse is more accurate], there was a simple three-sided wall which is really a screen containing photographs of many of the people he knew in his lifetime, and then there was his big desk in the middle, which was covered with all sorts of papers and memorabilia, etc., and the big chair behind it.<sup>6</sup>

The Funke article was written before Shyre had really cast anyone as Rogers, when Henry Fonda or Eddie Albert was being considered for the part.<sup>7</sup> However, in the end James Whitmore, whose acting career had begun at Yale University, was selected to play Will Rogers. "When Shyre later sent him Will Rogers' U.S.A., neither Whitmore nor his wife, actress Audra Lindly, was impressed. Eventually he succumbed to the urgings of Shyre and

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<sup>5</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup>Funke, "Will Rogers," section D, p. 1.

George Spota. . . ." <sup>8</sup> With the show cast, arrangements were made for two presentations of the show, one in St. Louis and one in Hyde Park, Long Island. These openings were followed by what was billed as the "world premiere" of the show in Greenville, South Carolina, and then the show opened in Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. As has been mentioned before, the actual premiere was often very difficult to identify because many times the people involved with these productions, Shyre included, seemed not to consider the productions in cities other than places like New York or Los Angeles to be legitimate engagements of their shows. For this reason a researcher often may find that a Dramatist Play Service script indicates that the first performance of a play had taken place in a New York theatre, when, in fact, it had had one or more previous engagements before it ever came to the New York stage. This practice may be common, readily accepted by those who document theatrical performances, but it misleads the researcher seeking full documentation of all public performances.

Premiere performance, St. Louis, 1970

Martin Goodman Productions presented the Spota and Merson production of Will Rogers' U.S.A., which opened

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<sup>8</sup>William Glover, "Whitmore finds one-man shows are rewarding," The Boston Herald American, March 9, 1977, n.p.

in St. Louis January 5, 1970.<sup>9</sup> The one-person show was presented at the Loretto-Hilton Center on the campus of Webster College. In a review from the St. Louis Post Dispatch, Myles Standish described the transition Whitmore went through at the beginning of the show as he "became" Will Rogers.

James Whitmore stepped out on the stage of the Loretto-Hilton Center last night with an earnest mien and wearing glasses and made a few eulogizing remarks about Will Rogers, folk humorist, actor, and cowboy philosopher.

Then he removed the glasses and his jacket and tie, placed a cowboy hat on the back of his head, and became Will Rogers.<sup>10</sup>

The Standish article was the first to claim the January 5, 1970, opening as, "the world premiere of Will Rogers' U.S.A."<sup>11</sup> The Greenville Piedmont and The Greenville News also claimed that their city hosted the world premiere January 14, 1970, in Greenville, South Carolina's Little Theatre. It is not known if the engagement in Hyde Park, Long Island, was considered a premiere also. The Standish article described the material used in the show and its continued appeal to the modern audience. He predicted that the Rogers show would have a great many admirers and concluded that Whitmore's

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<sup>9</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 12, folder #8.

<sup>10</sup>Myles Standish, "Will Rogers' Premiere," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 6, 1970, Sec. B, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup>Standish, "Will Rogers'," Sec. B, p. 3.



characterization was "delightful."<sup>12</sup> The Variety review of this presentation opened with a comment on the enthusiastic reception the performance had received from the opening night audience. Further, the reviewer credited the material, the adapter and the actor on their triumphant accomplishment. The review also indicated that the production was in two acts and ran about eighty minutes, "laced with laughter almost all the way. . . ."<sup>13</sup>

Premiere performance, Greenville Little Theatre, 1970. The Greenville News, Greenville, South Carolina, for Thursday, January 15, 1970, in an article written by Lucille B. Green, stated,

A Greenville Little Theatre capacity audience met the world-renowned Will Rogers, as recreated by James Whitmore, in the world premiere of Will Rogers' U.S.A., Wednesday night and discovered that his words, wit, and wisdom were as pertinent, as penetrating and as salty as they were when they first boosted Rogers to the pinnacle of fame.<sup>14</sup>

Will Rogers Jr. was on hand and expressed his gratitude and the gratitude of his family to Shyre and Spota for their work in helping to make the production a reality. The remainder of the review was very complimentary to Whitmore and his ability to communicate

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<sup>12</sup>Standish, "Will Rogers'," Sec. B, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup>Review, "Will Rogers' U.S.A.," Variety, January 21, 1970, n.p.

<sup>14</sup>Lucille B. Green, "Whitmore Makes Hit with Will Rogers' Wit," The Greenville News [Greenville, South Carolina], January 15, 1970, n.p.

vocally and physically "the easy cowboy manner" of Rogers. Further, Green reviewed excerpts from the material, commenting on their timelessness. Green related that Whitmore closed the show with Rogers' famous line, "Live your life so you wouldn't be afraid to sell the family parrot to the town gossip."<sup>15</sup> and in concluding the article she advised Greenville residents not to miss the rare opportunity to see what probably was "the most uproariously funny show that ever played here."<sup>16</sup> Another Greenville newspaper, the Greenville Piedmont, in a review written by Miriam Goodspeed, said, "Greenville put on its best bib and tucker and went to a world premiere last night."<sup>17</sup> Goodspeed said that the most under-dressed person there was Whitmore (Rogers) in his "brown pants, blue shirt, boots, cowboy hat and red neckerchief. . . ."<sup>18</sup> The review continued in the same manner as the Green review, praising Whitmore, Shyre, and the producers for the fine work they had done in re-creating Will Rogers for another generation of Americans to enjoy.

Hyde Park Playhouse, Hyde Park, Long Island, 1970.

The reviews for the production and the handwritten tour

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<sup>15</sup>Greene, "Whitmore Makes Hit," n.p.

<sup>16</sup>Greene, "Whitmore Makes Hit," n.p.

<sup>17</sup>Miriam Goodspeed, "Will Rogers World Premiere Sparkles; Whitmore Masterly," Greenville Piedmont, January 15, 1970, n.p.

<sup>18</sup>Goodspeed, "Rogers Premiere," n.p.

list document a one week run of Will Rogers' U.S.A. in Hyde Park, Long Island, during August, 1970, before the opening at Ford's Theatre the following month. Michael Bouche in an article in the Poughkeepsie Journal stated that Will Rogers' U.S.A. opened Monday night, August 31, at the Hyde Park Playhouse and was "a tour de force for Whitmore and adapter, director Paul Shyre as well as a fitting climax to the Playhouse's premiere season."<sup>19</sup> The review praised Will Rogers the man, Shyre's material, and Whitmore's "brilliant display of acting talent and emotional understanding for the subject portrayed. . . ."<sup>20</sup> The review also credited Eldon Elder's setting, saying it put most of the other set designs for that summer to "shame by its natural simplicity and careful selectivity. . . ."<sup>21</sup>

Ford's Theatre, Washington, D.C., 1970. Will Rogers' U.S.A. opened officially on Wednesday, September 16, 1970, at the Circle in the Square at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., and closed at the Mark Taper Forum of the Los Angeles Music Center on January 2, 1971, after an extended run. A handwritten tour schedule found in the Shyre papers<sup>22</sup> indicated that the production played in the

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<sup>19</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #12.

<sup>20</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #12.

<sup>21</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #12.

<sup>22</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 12, folder #8.

following cities during this first national tour: Hyde Park, Long Island; Washington, D.C.; Salt Lake City, Utah; Evansville, Hanover, Indianapolis and South Bend, Indiana; Elmira and Rochester, New York; Tulsa, Oklahoma, and another place in Oklahoma, the name of which is illegible on the handwritten list; Atlanta, Georgia; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Conway, Arkansas; Commerce, El Paso, and San Angelo, Texas; Tempe, Arizona; San Francisco, California; Elmhurst and Chicago, Illinois; Oshkosh, Wisconsin; Louisville, Kentucky; Baltimore, Maryland; and a three week engagement in Los Angeles. The handwritten document lists several other cities with illegible names, but even the partial list shown above indicated that the tour was an extensive undertaking.

The Washington, D.C. run began with a preview performance on Monday, September 14, at 7:30 p.m. Subsequent performances ran nightly at 7:30 until October 4, 1970. Matinee performances during the run were presented on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. and Sundays at 3:00 p.m.<sup>23</sup> Joy Billington of the Washington Evening Star wrote,

If Will Rogers Jr. had any doubts about his father's writings being "ephemeral" and only topical in his day, those doubts were dispelled

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<sup>23</sup>Information from printed press release entitled, "An Evening of Humor (Will Rogers' U.S.A.) to Open Season at Ford's Theatre presented by Circle in the Square and Starring James Whitmore," released September 8, 1970.

last night when James Whitmore's re-creation of Will Rogers' U.S.A. received a standing ovation at Ford's Theatre.

"'It was like a breath of fresh air,' Interior Secretary Walter Hickel said after the one-man performance. . . ." <sup>24</sup> The article pointed out the distinguished members of the audience including "the Oklahoma Congressional delegation, the Hickels, Postmaster General and Mrs. Blount, the Herb Kleins, and Rep. John Brademas. . . ." <sup>25</sup> After the performance there was a special reception for invited guests from the audience. During the reception, held in the Lincoln room at Ford's Theatre, Will Rogers Jr., "a former Congressman himself and now a consultant on Indian affairs for the Interior Department," <sup>26</sup> and James Whitmore were the centers of attention. The Washington Post article, by Richard L. Coe, made the point that "With an actor's license, Whitmore has rightly sought to get the flavor of an individual man, not mimic a shadowy memory. His own voice, for instance, is not Rogers' pitch." <sup>27</sup> Coe later indicated that Rogers' voice was high-pitched and nasal with a sharp timbre.

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<sup>24</sup> Joy Billington, "Woman's World: Will Rogers Lives Again," The Evening Star [Washington, D.C.] September 16, 1970, section C, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Billington, "Will Rogers," section C, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> Billington, "Will Rogers," section C, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup> Richard L. Coe, "Will Rogers': On Stage. . . ," The Washington Post, September 16, 1970, n.p.

Emerson Beauchamp, staff writer for The Evening Star, bluntly confessed, "Even if one-man shows are not your cup of tea--and they aren't mine--James Whitmore in Will Rogers' U.S.A. is recommended."<sup>28</sup> His high praise continued,

I may still have my doubts that one actor on a stage speaking one man's words constitutes a full evening in the theater, but it's hard to think of anything better calculated to lull such doubts than Whitmore as Rogers.<sup>29</sup>

Later in the article Beauchamp agreed with Coe when he pointed out,

Whitmore doesn't exactly imitate Rogers, but he does conjure him up, using a folksy manner of speech and a cowpoke gait that allow us to forget the actor and accept the character in record time. After that, we're with him all the way.<sup>30</sup>

This article praised the excellent choice of material used in the adaptation and gave several examples to prove the point. Other reviews of the performance were equally positive, praising many of the same qualities mentioned above.<sup>31</sup>

Shyre gave a brief description of this performance, which had more characteristics of high definition,

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<sup>28</sup>Emerson Beauchamp, "The Passing Show: Whitmore Glows as Will Rogers," The Evening Star [Washington, D.C.], September 16, 1970, section A, p. 18.

<sup>29</sup>Beauchamp, "Passing Show," section A, p. 18.

<sup>30</sup>Beauchamp, "Passing Show," section A, p. 18.

<sup>31</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 14, Env. #1 or Shyre Collection, Box 11, folder #12.

and some of his reasons for the higher definition, but one of the best descriptions of the setting and the opening of the show appeared in the Neil MacNeil article for Time Magazine:

The stage is almost bare. A few props rivet the playgoer's eye: an ancient desk piled high with books and yesterday's newspapers, a sawhorse with a Western saddle over it, a picture of a turn-of-the-century cowboy. Suddenly, a lecturer appears. He wears a coat. As he sheds the coat, he reveals to the audience that he is performing the eternal theatrical ritual, dropping the mask, assuming the myth, becoming the man. He pulls out a bandana and ties it around his neck. He gives his forelock a forward tug. Bowed of leg, lariat twirling, Stetson arched back over his forehead and shy grin. It is Will Rogers.<sup>32</sup>

Shyre described the opening of the show in much the same way as above but included an indication of the audience reaction.

As far as Will Rogers was concerned, the thing I did that was a little different, when the play began I had Whitmore coming on as himself and then as he began to describe Will Rogers, he would slowly evolve . . . taking off his jacket, opening his collar and letting out a scarf . . . he put a stick of gum in his mouth, he'd muss his hair and then he grabbed some old cowboy hat and put it on and a lasso, so that by the time he finished describing him, the lights would have changed and he suddenly became Will Rogers in front of the audience . . . there was immediate and instant applause from the audience for this unique transformation.<sup>33</sup>

This is the only time Shyre used this technique with his one-person shows and it seemed to have been a very

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<sup>32</sup>Neil MacNeil, "The Theater: Old Cowhand," Time, September 28, 1970, p. 76.

<sup>33</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 28.

successful device. Many of the reviewers commented on the material that Shyre chose to use in the show. Michael Putney, in his review for the National Observer, included the most extensive listing of excerpts from the show and even took the time to categorize them. The following is a partial list:

Education (his own): 'I could have gone to West Point, but I was too proud to talk to a Congressman.'

Doctors: 'The only problem with doctors is you gotta be near dead to appreciate them.'

The Democratic Party: 'I do not belong to any organized political party--I'm a Democrat.'

The Republican Party: 'If the good Lord can find his way clear to blessing the Republican Party the way its been carrying on lately, I don't think the rest of us is going to have to ask for it.'

Fence-straddling: 'When you straddle an issue it takes a lot more explaining.'<sup>34</sup>

Putney's examples suggest that he recognized the relevance of Rogers' material for contemporary audiences.

San Angelo Municipal Auditorium, San Angelo, Texas, 1970. The San Angelo Standard-Times for Friday morning, October 30, 1970, carried an article written by Odene Crawford on the Will Rogers performance presented the night before. The review was very similar to the Washington reviews, so much so that it seems evident, or at least likely, that Crawford had read one or more of them. She covers the same characteristics, quotes a lot of the

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<sup>34</sup>Michael Putney, "The Whitmore Reincarnation: Will Rogers, Satirist for Today," The National Observer, October 5, 1970, p. 18.



same material from the show, and often uses the same words as the Washington reviews. The review praised the work of Shyre and Whitmore, and concluded with praise for Rogers himself, saying,

Rogers' voice was one of a sane man in an insane world who nevertheless loved the inmates and shared his homey wisdom with them. It was a loss to humankind when his voice was stilled. It's gratifying to hear it again through James Whitmore.<sup>35</sup>

It is safe to say that this show enjoyed great success almost everywhere it played. In fact, Shyre himself indicated that Will Rogers' U.S.A. was one of the most successful things he has ever been involved in thus far in his career.

I know Whitmore has gone out on at least four or five different tours. . . . But I would say of all the productions that I've adapted, that the Will Rogers . . . was the most financially remunerative for me. . . .<sup>36</sup>

Marines Memorial Theater, San Francisco, 1970.

Will Rogers' U.S.A. opened at the Marines Memorial Theater in San Francisco on November 2, 1970, and closed November 28th of that same year. This longer run produced the same warm reaction from reviewers in San Francisco. Jeanne Miller in a review for the San Francisco Examiner covered much of the same material as did the reviews mentioned previously but astutely noted, "Despite the difficulties

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<sup>35</sup>Odene Crawford, "Whitmore Skilled in Rogers Show," San Angelo Standard-Times, October 30, 1970, section B, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 29.

of presenting a one man show in terms of single-handedly holding an audience's attention, Whitmore does a masterful job."<sup>37</sup> She added that Whitmore had a "tender quality which he uses to great advantage, particularly in a poignant tale about Rogers' attachment to his horse."<sup>38</sup> She concluded the review with a small warning,

Only those who prefer more sophisticated humor than Rogers' cornpone, cracker-barrel gems of wisdom will be disappointed in the show which reflects the innocence of an era that seems a million light years away from our troubled times.<sup>39</sup>

The Gerald Nachman review for the Oakland Tribune seemed to clarify the popular appeal of the show as well as anyone.

It's easy to repeat the cliché that Will Rogers is as relevant now as he was before the term became fashionable, but as you sit there marveling at the unending list of funny, wise, universal observations, the real wonder is that it took 35 years for someone to rediscover the man.

More than joshing it, Will Rogers knew what America was all about, where it was at and what it was up to. . . . If you're surprised (as I'll admit I was) that Will Rogers lives, in fact as well as reputation, maybe it's because he was so basic, to wit: 'If you have to go 7,000 miles to find a war you must be looking hard for one' . . . 'This is a funny place: ten guys could buy the whole country and ten million people can't get enough to eat.'<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Jeanne Miller, "Will Rogers'--Peaceful Times Gone By," San Francisco Examiner, November 3, 1970, p. 30.

<sup>38</sup> Miller, "Peaceful Times," p. 30.

<sup>39</sup> Miller, "Peaceful Times," p. 30.

<sup>40</sup> Gerald Nachman, "Stage and Screen: Will of the People," Oakland Tribune, November 3, 1970, n.p.

The Nachman review concluded by advising the audience to see the Rogers show, and Rogers himself, as more than just a comedian, more than a popular philosopher, as a man who cared deeply about America and had a strong sense of humor and an even stronger sense of decency. Another review offers proof that the positive response was universal. Bunny Gillespie of the Enterprise-Journal said Will Rogers' U.S.A. was a show well worth seeing, "a delightful theatre experience . . . even for those who can't relate to Will Rogers out of earlier film, newsreel, radio or journalistic encounters."<sup>41</sup> In a very complimentary review she touched on many of the elements that other reviewers had found pleasing about the Rogers show and concluded, "Audiences at Marines Memorial are not only paying, they're happy about it."<sup>42</sup> The San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle ran a review that dealt almost exclusively with Will Rogers the man. The article said that Rogers was reputed never to have registered or voted in order to remain politically neutral so that he could freely comment on either party and make such classic statements as, "'We've got the best politicians in the country that money can buy.'"<sup>43</sup> From the reviews collected

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<sup>41</sup>Bunny Gillespie, "Laughs and Tears: Whitmore is Stunning in Will Rogers' U.S.A.," Enterprise-Journal, November 20, 1970, section 1, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup>Gillespie, "Whitmore Stunning," section 1, p. 10.

<sup>43</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 14, Env. #1.

it seems evident that the Rogers show was very popular with audiences and critics during the 1970 tour.

Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles, 1971. The next documented production of Will Rogers' U.S.A. took place in December of 1971 at the Mark Taper Forum on the Los Angeles Music Center. The information about the performance came from an article by Will Tusher. The article opened with the words,

It's not going to be easy to come up with a more satisfying, more warming evening at the theatre than James Whitmore's thoroughly delightful one-man show, Will Rogers' U.S.A., in for a fortnight's tenancy at the Mark Taper Forum.<sup>44</sup>

Tusher's review expressed a different opinion of the performance from that of other reviewers up to this point. Whereas the other reviewers, in many different cities, were quick to point out that Whitmore was not Rogers, Tusher argues that at least in some deep way Whitmore "is" Rogers. This, however, does not mean Tusher thought Whitmore actually looked or sounded like Will Rogers. But as he stated,

He (Whitmore) emerges the total embodiment of Rogers, mastering his amiability and insight in a marvelously sustained and subtly intelligent performance. . . . Whitmore's interpretation is whole, a total surrender to and immersion in character, and therefore escapes all the pitfalls of caricature. He registers a stunning triumph.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 14, Env. #1.

<sup>45</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 14, Env. #1.

The article is one of the few that commented on the material from which the show was adapted. "Not a liberty has been taken; not a word of Rogers has been changed, nor a syllable presumptuously added."<sup>46</sup> He concluded the review saying that Whitmore and Shyre had revealed Rogers as "a Vietnam critic before his time and a prophet for all times."<sup>47</sup>

Will Rogers' U.S.A., television production, 1972. Bernie Harrison in his article for the Washington Sunday Star noted the presentation of Will Rogers' U.S.A. on CBS television, channel 9 in the Washington area, at 8 p.m. March 5.<sup>48</sup> He concluded that since the show had done so well two years before in the intimate surroundings of Ford's Theatre that it might be equally pleasing on television, since television was also an intimate medium. The remainder of the article spoke of Will Rogers' wit and its relevance to television viewers, predicting it would be successful. No information was found on the critical response to this airing of Will Rogers' U.S.A.

Will Rogers' U.S.A., 1972 tour. John Willis' Theatre World published in 1973 documented a tour of Will Rogers' U.S.A. that began in the Loretto-Hilton

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<sup>46</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 14, Env. #1.

<sup>47</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 14, Env. #1.

<sup>48</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 14, Env. #1.

Center in St. Louis on Monday, September 13, 1971, and closed February 27, 1972, at the John Hancock Hall in Boston. This documentation is the first source to mention the Columbia recording that was made from a live performance of Whitmore performing as Rogers.<sup>49</sup>

Will Rogers' U.S.A., 1973 tour. Again, John Willis' Theatre World documented this tour of the Rogers show, indicating the opening in Fullerton, California, on Friday, January 26, 1973, and closing on February 9, 1973, in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, New York. the only thing unique about this tour was that it was the first time someone other than Whitmore played Will Rogers. For this tour, Paul Tripp was cast in the role.<sup>50</sup>

Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles, 1973. On December 20, 1973, Will Rogers' U.S.A. opened at the Music Center in Los Angeles. The Rogers' show, as has been shown above, had been at the Mark Taper Forum twice before, in December of 1970 and 1971. This particular engagement closed January 20, 1974, and, like the previous engagements, it also received a string of excellent reviews. Sylvie Drake, staff writer for the Los Angeles Times, previewed the show.

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<sup>49</sup> John Willis, ed., John Willis' Theatre World, 1971-1972 (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1973), p. 164, Vol. 28.

<sup>50</sup> John Willis, ed., John Willis' Theatre World, 1972-1973 (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1974), p. 180, Vol. 29.

For the third time in four years James Whitmore will present Los Angeles with a personal Christmas present: his beautifully crafted one-man show, Will Rogers' U.S.A., which opens at the Mark Taper Forum a week from today and stays with us through Jan. 20.<sup>51</sup>

Drake added that it was not Whitmore's "gift" alone, but that it was a gift from George Spota and Paul Shyre also. It was Whitmore, Drake said, "who took the words, the concepts and the country mannerisms and forged the lot into a remarkable portrayal of America's most abiding folk hero."<sup>52</sup> The Drake article also revealed the effect the role had on Whitmore. "'I [Whitmore] had not known much about him,' Whitmore admits, 'until I started working on the show. People are always asking how doing it has affected me. It's made me dotty about the guy.'"<sup>53</sup>

This article also offers information about changes in the show through the years. Although Whitmore did not indicate whether he or Shyre made the adjustments, it seems logical from statements Shyre made about their work together on A Whitman Portrait that they were mutually agreed upon. When asked if the show had changed much since it had been at the Mark Taper Forum in 1970, Whitmore said,

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<sup>51</sup>Sylvie Drake, "Stage Notes: Whitmore's Rogers' --A Timely Gift," The Los Angeles Times, December 19, 1973, Part IV, p. 31.

<sup>52</sup>Drake, "Whitmore's Rogers'," Part IV, p. 31.

<sup>53</sup>Drake, "Whitmore's Rogers'," Part IV, p. 31.

'It always varies some,' says Whitmore, 'in small and not essential ways. I'm doing a whole new thing on congressional investigations, conservation of resources, stuff on pollution and on keeping out of foreign lands--for obvious reasons. It all sounds rather pompous, but that's Whitmore, not Rogers. The amazing thing about Rogers is how his material adapts to changing situations. His comments about the Teapot Dome apply to Watergate. I'm using some great stuff on lawyers and lawyers testifying. Remarks on the crisis mentality (talking about the Depression) apply to conditions today.'<sup>54</sup>

The article concluded that although the show was improvisational in feeling, in reality it was carefully rehearsed and that Whitmore would fully set the show before opening in Los Angeles.

When I was doing one-nighters--65 cities in five and a half months--I would start to get bored and got so I could jump around a lot. But I'm going to set the show before I open here. Twenty minutes of new material is dangerous enough.<sup>55</sup>

Ray Loynd in his review for the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner stated,

This performance is Whitmore's finest moment: the material shares the alert outrage of our best funnymen, and the result is as refreshingly American as Ben Franklin's Silence Dogood letters or Finley Peter Dunne's Irish saloon-keeper, Mr. Dooley. Young people should flock to the Taper. They'll discover something new.<sup>56</sup>

Ron Pennington's Hollywood Reporter review asserted,

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<sup>54</sup>Drake, "Whitmore's Rogers'," Part IV, p. 31.

<sup>55</sup>Drake, "Whitmore's Rogers'," Part IV, p. 31.

<sup>56</sup>Ray Loynd, "Will Rogers/James Whitmore Deflate Pomposity at Taper," The Los Angeles Herald-Examiner, December 28, 1973, section B, p. 1.



There's something kind of reaffirming at this point in time about James Whitmore's Will Rogers' U.S.A. . . . Watching and listening to Whitmore in his uncanny recreation . . . emphasizes that things haven't changed . . . but it's also reassuring to be able to look back and realize this country has gotten through seemingly disastrous events before and that it can probably do it again.<sup>57</sup>

This review also reinforced the views of many other critics who had seen the show in the past: "Whitmore's performance of Rogers is a magnificent thing to behold, totally wiping away time and space to reconstruct a living monument to this man. It's something that should be experienced by everyone."<sup>58</sup> Sylvie Drake, whose preview article about the performance was mentioned above, also reviewed the performance after it opened. Her appraisal of the show remained high as she declared that people would not tire of seeing it again anymore than they would "tire of Christmas Dinner."<sup>59</sup> She called Whitmore's performance "every bit as brilliant and every bit as uncanny as the cowboy philosopher Whitmore now seems to inhabit more comfortably than ever."<sup>60</sup> Drake ended her review with the thought that though she could

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<sup>57</sup>Ron Pennington, "Play Review: Will Rogers' U.S.A.," The Hollywood Reporter, December 28, 1973, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup>Pennington, "Will Rogers," p. 3.

<sup>59</sup>Sylvie Drake, "Stage Review: Whitmore's Will Rogers Revisited," The Los Angeles Times, December 28, 1973, Part IV, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup>Drake, "Will Rogers Revisited," Part IV, p. 1.

go on and on about the performance, her simple recommendation was, "You're much better off just to go and see him."<sup>61</sup>

Ford's Theatre, Washington, D.C., 1974. Will Rogers' U.S.A. returned to Ford's Theatre on January 22, 1974, and ran through February 10 of that same year. The Ford's Theatre news release indicated that a full twenty minutes of new material had been added since the show was last seen at Ford's Theatre in 1970.<sup>62</sup> The reviews by Louis Lague of the Washington Star and Donnie Radcliffe of the Washington Post were both like many others that came before. They praised the timelessness of the material and the perception of Will Rogers, and thanked Shyre and Whitmore for bringing it back to Ford's Theatre after three years of touring.<sup>63</sup>

American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco, 1974. The Best Plays series documents thirty-two performances of Will Rogers' U.S.A. beginning February 26, 1974, at the Marines' Memorial Theater in San Francisco. No reviews for these performances were located. However, judging from similar information about the other shows, one can surmise that this performance was a part of a

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<sup>61</sup>Drake, "Will Rogers Revisited," Part IV, p. 1.

<sup>62</sup>Information from printed press release entitled, "Will Rogers' U.S.A., Starring James Whitmore returns to Ford's Theatre on January 22," released January 2, 1974.

<sup>63</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 14, Env. #1.

larger tour that ultimately ended in New York City at the Helen Hayes Theater.

Helen Hayes Theater, New York City, 1974. Reviews for the four-week New York production of Will Rogers' U.S.A. were generally positive. However, Richard Watts pointed out in his review for the New York Post:

It makes a quietly pleasant two hours of entertainment, although no one could say it was an exciting evening. It inevitably lacks the dramatic power of Henry Fonda's brilliant one-man show about Clarence Darrow. Indeed, the only moment of drama comes by implication when Rogers says that he is leaving next day on an airplane journey to Alaska with Wylie Post and you remember that his plane crashed and he and Post were killed.<sup>64</sup>

The Clive Barnes review was more complimentary to Whitmore and the material, but also stated, "the evening does lack something in variety and comic tension."<sup>65</sup> Other reviews were mixed.<sup>66</sup> As Shyre admitted, "You are correct in assuming that the reception outside of New York was far greater than it got when it played Broadway. The reception on Broadway when it played the Helen Hayes Theater was mixed. . . ."<sup>67</sup> In general, as Shyre said, the New York reception for Will Rogers' U.S.A. was

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<sup>64</sup>Richard Watts, "Theater: An Evening with Will Rogers," The New York Post, May 7, 1974, p. 68.

<sup>65</sup>Clive Barnes, "Whitmore on Target as Will Rogers," The New York Times, May 7, 1974, p. 54.

<sup>66</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 14, Env. #1.

<sup>67</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 28.

definitely not as upbeat and enthusiastic as it was in other parts of the country.<sup>68</sup>

Sydney Laurence Auditorium, Anchorage, Alaska, 1981. the Best Plays series documents a production of Will Rogers' U.S.A. presented by the Alaska Repertory Theater January 22, 1981. Sid Conrad played the role of Will Rogers and the performance was directed by Robert J. Farley. Once again a Shyre adaptation was produced as a part of a larger season of plays. Other productions for the season included On Golden Pond, The Elephant Man, and A Midsummer Night's Dream.<sup>69</sup>

#### The President Is Dead

Thought you were finished with Paul Shyre? Not at all. It appears that he also has a play that is going to have its premiere at the Alley Theater in Houston in the spring. This one is called The President is Dead and deals with the assassination of Lincoln. Shyre quickly admits that his play contains parallels with the murder of President Kennedy, as well as with "other assassinations of prominent people, past and those yet to come."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>For a detailed description and further reviews of the 1974 performance of Will Rogers' U.S.A. see Brent Bouldin's Master's thesis written at Louisiana State University in 1976 entitled, Ten Productions of Non-Dramatic Literature in the Broadway and Off-Broadway Theatre in 1974.

<sup>69</sup>Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., Best Plays of 1980-1981 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., Inc., 1982), p. 67.

<sup>70</sup>Lewis Funke, "News of the Rialto: Will Rogers Recalled," The New York Times, October 13, 1968, section D, p. 1.

This article by Lewis Funke revealed that the play's characters would be members of the Lincoln cabinet as well as conspirators in the assassination.

"Besides showing forces at work in Washington at the time, Shyre also will show the nation at large through the use of vignettes which reveal popular opinion and the effect of 'managed' communications."<sup>71</sup> The article concluded with Shyre's acknowledgement that Secretary of State Stewart Udall had been very helpful in providing him with access to the National Archives as well as to the material he needed from the Library of Congress. The Funke article was written in 1968. On August 7, 1969, the New York Times ran an article headlined, "Shyre Assails Ford's Theatre Board"<sup>72</sup> written by Louis Calta. The article recounts Shyre's displeasure with Ford's Theatre Board for rejecting the planned production of The President is Dead.

Charges of censorship were made yesterday against the board of directors of the Ford's Theatre Society in Washington, because a play dealing with the assassination of Abraham Lincoln was rejected for production.

Paul Shyre, author of the play, The President is Dead, said it was to have opened in November at the restored Ford's Theatre, where Lincoln was shot 104 years ago. Two days ago, he said, he was informed that the board considered the script inappropriate for the old playhouse.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Funke, "Will Rogers," section D, p. 1.

<sup>72</sup>Louis Calta, "Shyre Assails Ford's Theatre Board," The New York Times, August 7, 1969, p. 28, col.1.

<sup>73</sup>Calta, "Shyre Assails Ford's," p. 28, col. 1.

Shyre had indicated that the catalyst for this adaptation "was having been in the Ford's Theatre . . . the place where Lincoln was shot and going downstairs to the Lincoln museum."<sup>74</sup> Most likely Shyre was referring to the Will Rogers production that played Ford's three times and the reception in the museum, which followed the first presentation.

The newspaper story explained that Mrs. Childers Hewitt, then president of the society, said that the Shyre script was just one of many scripts that had been submitted for consideration and that no censorship had taken place. She explained that certain members of the board had raised questions about the historical accuracy of the character of the Secretary of War at the time of the Lincoln assassination, Edwin M. Stanton. The play seemed to implicate him in the assassination conspiracy. As Hewitt explained, "Midway in the discussion of this aspect, she [Hewitt] said, Theodore Mann, current artistic director of Ford's withdrew the play from consideration."<sup>75</sup> Mann said that the only reason they decided not to do the play was that they did not like it, that there had been no formal agreement between Shyre and the Theatre. Shyre said that Mann had indicated to him that the Secretary of War appeared to be too much of a villain and that

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<sup>74</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 30.

<sup>75</sup>Calta, "Shyre Assails Ford's," p. 28, col. 1.

he [Shyre] had agreed to soften the character, but had refused to submit the script to the board for reappraisal. In the letter to Shyre from Paul Libin, managing director of Ford's at the time, Shyre was told that the board felt "'that a play with such truth would bring back very strong feelings about the Kennedy assassination and raise grave questions about the Lincoln assassination that together would be inappropriate for Ford's Theatre.'" <sup>76</sup> Libin admitted his statement about the inappropriateness of the production, but said it was only a diplomatic way of rejecting a bad script. As Shyre indicated,

Originally I was negotiating with Nina Vance, the Alley Theatre in Houston, who wanted to do it, but unfortunately it just dragged on and nothing happened. Then, at Ford's Theatre, at the time the producer there was Ted Mann from Circle in the Square, he wanted to do it and then again changed his mind. So I had gotten sort of tired of all this waiting and here I had a direct offer to do it in California at Chabot, and I did it there. <sup>77</sup>

It was because of this direct offer that The President is Dead was first produced at Chabot College in Hayward, California.

Premiere performance, Chabot College, Hayward, California

In November of 1971, Chabot College in the San Francisco area was the scene for the world premiere of The President is Dead. Gary Tischler described the

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<sup>76</sup> Calta, "Shyre Assails Ford's," p. 28, col. 1.

<sup>77</sup> Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 30.

festivities in a rather off-handed manner:

Hayward, not exactly the dramatic flower of the West of the Bay Area, will take on a little theatrical color Friday at 8:30 p.m.

Some out-of-town, back-East producers will be in. Big city (San Francisco) critics will be there. Theatrical history, of sorts, will be made at Chabot College.<sup>78</sup>

Tischler said the city could blame most of the above excitement on Paul Shyre and his play, The President is Dead. The play was described as a trial, with much of the script coming from "verbatim trial testimony from war department records."<sup>79</sup> Shyre described this production as a "trial balloon" and mentioned that it was dropped by Ford's before he brought it to California. the production ran two and one-half hours and was performed by 42 professional and local actors and actresses. It was difficult to believe the production was this big, but Shyre confirmed it. "I remember there was the use of music. We used slides. but physically it was a huge production. . . ."<sup>80</sup> Shyre surmised that this was the main reason The President is Dead was done only this once, "because even just the size of the cast, it could probably never be done anywhere else unless it was the sort of show that showed enormous possibilities, as a commercial success,

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<sup>78</sup>Gary Tischler, "Theatrical History Due for Chabot," The Daily Review [Hayward, California], November 9, 1971, p. 13.

<sup>79</sup>Tischler, "Theatrical History," p. 13.

<sup>80</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 31.



which I don't believe this one did."<sup>81</sup> The article also indicated the use of music and slide projections in a multi-media fashion. "Shyre describes the style of the play as almost Brechtian."<sup>82</sup> "It was done on a wide, sort of Elizabethan style stage."<sup>83</sup>

The show ran from November 13 through November 19, 1971, and as Shyre said, it has not been repeated. The reviews for this show, as Shyre put it, were, "mixed--one leading paper thought it was wonderful; another thought it was terrible."<sup>84</sup> This performance seems to be an instance of an experiment which was attempted only once. It had the distinction of being the largest cast Shyre ever used for a production of non-dramatic literature, and it was the only one that was taken, in part, from official U.S. government documents.

#### New York, New York

The next Shyre adaptation was another instance of his being invited to do the work based on the reputation of his past work in the field. Paul Shyre spoke of how this next adaptation came about in his 1982 interview:

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<sup>81</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 31.

<sup>82</sup>Tischler, "Theatrical History," p. 13.

<sup>83</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 29.

<sup>84</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 31.

Actually I was approached by the editors of Poetry Magazine. They wanted to put on a benefit to raise money for their organization and I believe for some down and out poets, and they wanted to know if I would do something with the theme of New York City as the basis for the piece. So the idea I conceived was a potpourri of both prose and poetry and music, all dealing with New York City from the early street cries to popular songs like Richard Rogers' "I'll Take Manhattan" through poetry dealing strictly with New York City written by everyone from Walt Whitman to Allen Ginsberg. There was even a prose section of Sean O'Casey, his first visit to New York in 1934, which I got from the later autobiographical books. . . .<sup>85</sup>

New York, New York was the result of this work.

As Shyre indicated, it was produced by the New York Quarterly Poetry Review Foundation, Inc. at the Circle in the Square Theatre, Monday Evening, May 25, 1970. The staging, similar to other adaptations Shyre had done in the past, was "all done simply with stools and lecterns and a cast of six actors [and actresses]."<sup>86</sup> The transitional material used between the poems in the adaptation was made up of the prose selections and the songs,

The actors would burst out with some kind of song dealing with New York . . . a street cry. It could be anything. But it would all deal with New York, I mean, even the inscription written on the Statue of Liberty--the Emma Lazarus poem--was used.<sup>87</sup>

The group sponsoring the performance published a magazine entitled The New York Quarterly. The issue

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<sup>85</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 32.

<sup>86</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 32.

<sup>87</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 32.

published dealing with this particular performance indicated, in a lengthy opening statement, the reasons for sponsorship of the project:

The New York Quarterly is a magazine that has grown out of a concern which many of us have for the pure craft and technique of poetry writing. We are not interested in schools or fashions, aesthetic theories or critical estimates, as we are in those principles of poetry which cut across any and all schools of poetry.

There are, we believe, certain basic craft considerations to be found in a poem by a confessional poet, a Black Mountain poet, a 'beat' poet, a subjective imagist poet, a New York school poet, a rock lyric poet, or any other dominant or emerging school of poetry today.

We would rather read a good essay on assonance, than a polemical piece on who's supposed to be the greatest poet living today.

We don't know of an existing poetry magazine that focuses on craft to this extent. We don't know of an existing poetry magazine that doesn't fall prey to some sort of partisan opinion or value judgment.

And we feel a deep need for an unbiased poetry magazine today. We hope to involve the reader and the writer in a rediscovery of the pure craft of poetry.

We are also drawing from the experience of living and working in New York City. Because New York is (among other things) the communications center of the world, it seems appropriate that our craft magazine should be centered here. Also, because New York typifies the urban situation today--the writer in the metropolis--it seems the best way of showing the fundamentals of craft in league with the basic elements of existence in a modern city.

The concept, then, is craft. And the New York experience. And all that that implies. The poet at his craft, and in his city. On many ways, this is the dilemma of the modern artist, his crisis of identity, and his assertion of the human spirit.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Information from printed program of New York, New York: A Salute in Prose and Poetry, New York City engagement, Circle in the Square Theatre, May 25, 1970.

This statement of the purpose of the magazine seems to indicate clearly what a group like this might want from a performance of poetry: a wide variety of poets who were excellent with regard to craft and who were familiar with life in New York City. This desire seems to be what Shyre tried to accomplish with his adaptation.

The poets included in Shyre's adaptation of New York, New York are Elizabeth Bishop, Paul Blackburn, Gregory Corso, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg, Langston Hughes, Emma Lazarus, Federico Garcia Lorca, Robert Lowell, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Anne Sexton, Wallace Stevens, Robert Louis Stevenson, Henry David Thoreau, Charles Vermont, Andrei Vosnesensky, Diane Wakowski, Edith Wharton, and Walt Whitman. The presentation was produced by Jane Church and performed by Rae Allen, Leonard Frey, Christopher Hewett, Aline MacMahon, James Patterson, and Eli Wallach.<sup>89</sup> The performance edition of the magazine contained several fascinating articles by well-known poets on the subject, "What the Poet Needs from Society."<sup>90</sup> Diane Wakoski, Edward Field, and Stanley Kunitz each wrote short responses on the subject. Although they are not directly related to this study, they have indirect value, since some of what is covered in the responses has to do with public

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<sup>89</sup>Printed program, New York, New York.

<sup>90</sup>Printed program, New York, New York.

exposure, attention, or a hearing possible through performance. For this reason the responses have been included in the appendix. The program magazine also indicated the credentials of the performers and included a one-page retelling of the tragic 1770 suicide of a starving poet, Thomas Chatterton.<sup>91</sup> Further, the program contained the usual "list of contributors," a short history of the theatre, and advertisement for new volumes of poetry, etc.<sup>92</sup>

Alice Tully Hall, New York City, 1971. In 1971 Shyre was asked to repeat this performance, "at which time I cut it down to a cast of three . . . and it was very successful there even with three actors."<sup>93</sup> Howard Thompson's review for the New York Times began, "By now everybody must know that Aline MacMahon, Stephen Elliott, and Paul Shyre are important citizens of the American theater. They also read beautifully."<sup>94</sup> New York, New York replaced a cancelled evening of dance which was to be a part of the Sampler series in Alice Tully Hall. This article suggests that this performance was different from the 1970 presentation by the same name. Thompson indicated

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<sup>91</sup>Printed program, New York, New York.

<sup>92</sup>Printed program, New York, New York.

<sup>93</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 33.

<sup>94</sup>Howard Thompson, "3 Actors Honor City With Poetry," The New York Times, June 21, 1971, p. 38.

that the performance included a "cavalcade of poetry . . . prose and lyrics, as master-minded by the versatile Mr. Shyre. . . ." <sup>95</sup> This performance returned to the "concert reading style" Shyre had used for many of his other adaptations. The article also contained a partial list of the poets whose works were performed. They included Edith Warton, Allen Ginsberg, Sean O'Casey, Walt Whitman, Langston Hughes, Lorenz Hart, Emma Lazarus, Ogden Nash, and Edna St. Vincent Millay. The show opened and closed with the Comden-Adolph green lyric "New York, New York it's a hell of a town." <sup>96</sup>

S.S. Rotterdam, Theatre at Sea presentation, 1975.

Shyre gave a description of another performance of these compiled materials on board a ship sailing to Venezuela:

Then in 1975 the Theatre Guild, a whole group of us, went on the S.S. Rotterdam--something called 'Theatre at Sea,' and on the ship in the theatre we did another version of it for seven actors, and we all sat . . . reading it . . . that performance the cast included such luminous actors as Lillian Gish and Lynn Redgrave. . . . Tammy Grimes was in it, and Cyril Richard was in it, and I'm trying to think of--Dick Shawn was in it, as I recall, and George Rose . . . and Mildred Natwick was in it. It was quite an all-star performance, and it went extremely well, although it was a shortened version. <sup>97</sup>

As has been indicated by Shyre, this particular adaptation was never really set as far as the poets that

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<sup>95</sup>Thompson, "Actors Honor City," p. 38.

<sup>96</sup>Thompson, "Actors Honor City," p. 38.

<sup>97</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 33.

were included and the number of cast members used to perform it. Obviously, for something as flexible as this, it was easy to adjust the size of the cast and alter the selections according to the time or any other requirements. It should be noted that the next adaptation documented in this study, An Unpleasant Evening with H. L. Mencken, was also performed on the S.S. Rotterdam on the 1975 cruise.

#### An Unpleasant Evening with H. L. Mencken

This one-person show of the writings of Mencken has appeared under various titles and with several performers in the lead role. Two sources clarify Shyre's interest in Mencken. The first was the 1982 interview where he talked of his fascination with Mencken's writings.

Well . . . he was a favorite of mine as a writer and as a thinker and I think he had a very interesting, clear picture of the American scene. . . . He was a very astute critic of his times, and probably the most brilliant journalist of the twentieth century, bar none. He was an erudite thinker and, most important for me, his writings had a kind of theatricality about them, if properly adapted. . . . And, of course, the personality could be performed very effectively. It was the sort of person that you could put on the stage and there you had a definitive character that could be used.<sup>98</sup>

Second, according to an article by Shyre in Menckeniana, Shyre indicated his first contact with

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<sup>98</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 40.

Mencken was in junior high school. "Whenever there was an off-period, I liked to roam through the school library and pick out books at random to read . . . and one afternoon I came across the name of H. L. Mencken."<sup>99</sup> Shyre said that he first thought that an essay titled "On Being an American" was included to tell of the joys and importance of being a good American. But as he sat down and read the essay, he found it absolutely outrageous and wondered how anyone could write what Mencken did and not end up in jail. When he read the essays on religion that characterized God as a comedian whose audience was afraid to laugh, Shyre initially was shocked. He commented, "The initial shock of all this stayed with me several years . . . not so much because of what he said, but because of the possibility that what he said might be true."<sup>100</sup>

Years later Shyre picked up a paperback edited by Alistair Cooke titled Vintage Mencken and began reading him again. At first Shyre thought of doing a two-person show with material from one of Mencken's partners, George Jean Nathan, but as he read more, Mencken was the one that stuck in his mind. At this point Shyre decided to make a one-person show out of the material. He contacted August Mencken, who liked the idea of the show

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<sup>99</sup>Paul Shyre, "Mencken On Stage," Menckeniana: A Quarterly Review, 56 (Winter, 1975), p. 4.

<sup>100</sup>Shyre, "Mencken," p. 4.



but wanted to have final approval if it were ever performed on stage. This was back in "1960 or 1961" and it was not until "1969 or 1970" that Shyre finally got around to working on it.

The first script ran about three and one-half hours but, as Shyre put it,

that is usually how I start out. The script is usually very long with a lot of excess material. I find that the personality of the actor is very important in how the final script turns out. The way he speaks, the way he moves, the material has to change, to arrange itself accordingly.<sup>101</sup>

This may surprise those who assume that actors must fit the role created rather than expect the role to be altered to suit them. But since the process Shyre talks about occurs in the rehearsal period it may not be as unusual as it first sounds. When speaking of the special problems related to the performance in a one-person show, Shyre said,

I think the main problem is being able to sustain a full evening and that you have to create a character that presents itself dramatically and in a theatrical way in which the audience is generally interested. It helps if it's the type of public figure that an audience can identify with in advance. For instance, characters like Charles Dickens or Clarence Darrow or Will Rogers--most people who go to this know about the character that they are about to see. It's a question for the actor and the adapter to make it a refreshing something new and different with a beginning, a middle, and an end because it's very easy to bore an audience with a lot of rhetoric. There has to be a progression

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<sup>101</sup>Shyre, "Mencken," p. 5.

in the character, the character has to go through something in the course of the evening.<sup>102</sup>

In what has to be considered one of Shyre's clearest statements on the subject of this type of adaptation, he continued to indicate further problem areas with this genre:

The character must relate directly to the audience. That's the important thing. The audience is literally the other character in the play. The actor is alone on stage; there is obviously no one on with him, so he is talking through this device directly to the audience; he relates directly to them. He may conjure memories from the past, he may relive situations in his life, but there has to be a basic structure and, as I say, there's a beginning, a middle, and an end.<sup>103</sup>

This sounds like the definition for a production of non-dramatic literature given at the beginning of this paper. Shyre's words were a clear restatement of the quality of unity or progression spoken of in that definition.

The first person offered the role of Mencken was Jason Robards. Since he lived in Malibu, California, at the time, Shyre went out there "to direct him in the show and it would open in San Francisco."<sup>104</sup> But Robards was used to playing on stage with other actors to relate to and as Shyre went on to say, he also had a great deal of trouble with the material "and suddenly at the end of a

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<sup>102</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 43.

<sup>103</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, pp. 43-44.

<sup>104</sup>Shyre, "Mencken," p. 5.

week he disappeared."<sup>105</sup> The next actor chosen for the role was David Wayne, and the opening was moved to Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. in 1972.

Premiere performance, 1972, Washington, D.C.

Three thousand invitations were sent out for the preview of An Unpleasant Evening with H. L. Mencken.<sup>106</sup> This preview served a double purpose. First, it was the premiere of Shyre's newest one-person show, and second, it was a charity benefit for the Smith College Scholarship Fund. Smith was, at that time, the largest private woman's liberal arts college in the United States. The chairperson for the evening was the wife of Richard C. Van Dusen, then "Undersecretary for Housing and Urban Development. Honorary Chairman is the newly-arrived Mrs. Lewis Powell, wife of the Associate Justice to the Supreme Court and mother of a Smith graduate."<sup>107</sup> This quote indicates that much of the Washington "establishment" would have been in attendance for this preview, which turned out to be controversial. An Unpleasant Evening with H. L. Mencken officially opened at Ford's Theatre March 8, 1972, and closed after only twenty-three performances on the 26th of that same month. As Shyre put it, "It was not a

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<sup>105</sup>Shyre, "Mencken," p. 5.

<sup>106</sup>Review, "An Unpleasant Evening," The Potomac Current, February 24, 1972, n.p.

<sup>107</sup>Review, "An Unpleasant Evening," n.p.

success, although, surprisingly, the Baltimore critics were much kinder to it than the Washington critics."<sup>108</sup>

Indeed, the reviews were mixed. Most of them commented on the fact that David Wayne, who first achieved recognition in Finian's Rainbow and went on to play the original Ensign Pulver in Mr. Roberts, had not mastered the material. As Shyre put it, "He had trouble retaining his lines. There were all sorts of little problems where he kept stumbling on the script. . . . It was not a completely auspicious opening. . . ."<sup>109</sup> Television reviewer Roy Meachum was even more blunt referring to Wayne's performance: "The actor was groping and grasping for lines, showing confusion and calling on the prompter in [a] manner that would have done credit to John Barrymore in his later, lusher years."<sup>110</sup> And as Shyre himself said in the journal article, Wayne did not really seem to work in the role.<sup>111</sup> Meachum, however, concluded that during the second act Wayne "settled down and Ford's could easily be headed for the greatest triumph in its short life of producing its own shows."<sup>112</sup> Other reviewers were equally unimpressed with Mr. Wayne's performance.

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<sup>108</sup>Shyre, "Mencken," p. 5.

<sup>109</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 41.

<sup>110</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #2.

<sup>111</sup>Shyre, "Mencken," p. 5.

<sup>112</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #2.

The politest thing that can be said about David Wayne is that, at the least on opening night, he was unprepared. It is one thing to forget one's lines--which Wayne did--and still another to offer no characterization.<sup>113</sup>

Still other reviews said that Wayne was still mastering the material on opening night, or, as Richard Lebherz put it,

[Wayne] had apparently forgotten where he was in the script. He stood by his desk waiting for the prompter to feed him the next lines.

From that moment on, of course, the illusion of H. L. Mencken had been shattered. The performance ran downhill slowly until, by the end, Wayne was spouting Mencken epigrams and quotes as if by rote.<sup>114</sup>

Lebherz found it unbelievable "that this sort of catastrophe can occur on an opening night. . . . At times Wayne looked like a fish out of water, grasping for his next line, and uttering sentences that had no meaning whatsoever."<sup>115</sup> Other reviews were equally uncomplimentary to Wayne.

The material in the Mencken show was controversial. Reviews reprinted some of the comments that were included in the script. Some of them might have appeared in bad taste, for instance, "'Democracy is a dream like Santa Claus,' 'God suffers from a limited intelligence,'

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<sup>113</sup>Mel Gussow, "Theatre: Sage Mencken," The New York Times, March 10, 1972, p. 44.

<sup>114</sup>Richard Lebherz, "Much Ado About Mencken," The Post [Fredrick, Maryland], March 10, 1972, n.p.

<sup>115</sup>Lebherz, "Much Ado," n.p.

and from a clipping written about himself, 'Mencken is a pigeon and the world is the statue he shits on.'"<sup>116</sup>

Other comments were insulting to particular groups. Mississippi was called "'this bunghole of the United States . . . a cesspool of Baptists, a miasma of Methodism, snake charmers, and syphilitic evangelists.'"<sup>117</sup> Comments about Georgia as the home of the "lynching bee" brought about another conflict between Shyre and Ford's Theatre. The first conflict between Shyre and Ford's was over the production of The President is Dead mentioned earlier in this paper. It should be noted that Shyre did not consider these altercations to be significant.

The only problem I ever had there was not with Ford's Theatre but was when Circle in the Square was there, Ted Mann, who was one of the producers, had given me a verbal agreement to do my play, The President is Dead, and then reneged on it at the last minute, claiming he never said he was going to do it, and there was all sorts of bickering, but that was my only altercation in that theatre. As a matter of fact, when the theatre reopened in 1968 after being dormant for many years, I wrote the script for the opening gala performance. It was an all-star performance directed by John Houseman and, oh, everyone was in it from Henry Fonda to Helen Hayes. . . .<sup>118</sup>

As a national monument Ford's fell under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, which was dependent on Congress for its budgetary needs. As one

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<sup>116</sup>Lebherz, "Much Ado," n.p.

<sup>117</sup>Review, "Fuss at Ford's," Newsweek, March 20, 1972, p. 99.

<sup>118</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, pp. 42-43.

reviewer pointed out, Congress "numbers among its members a closely coordinated group of sons of the South,"<sup>119</sup> therefore it followed that someone would complain about the material. Although the Park Service insisted that the objections were simply "'suggestions,'"<sup>120</sup> many felt that the requests to remove certain parts of the script constituted an attempt at overt censorship. This controversy added an extra dimension to the reviews, and although the reviewers were not overly impressed with the material or Wayne's performance, they were upset about "The Forest Ranger as Critic."<sup>121</sup> For this reason alone some of the reviews softened:

It [the indecision about which script parts were going to be cut] had an unsettling effect upon the actor, who feared that controversy over what lines he would or would not say might create a distraction that he, as Mencken, would be unable to overcome.

Sure enough, that evening he noticed that several members of the audience had obtained copies of the script, which they were following word by word, to see if he left out any of the controversial lines. It was enough to make any actor nervous, and when one of the disputed passages brought on an unexpected round of applause it completely disoriented him.<sup>122</sup>

At least two other reviews noted this censorship:

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<sup>119</sup>Review, "The Forest Ranger as Critic," The Sun, March 9, 1972, n.p.

<sup>120</sup>Review, "Fuss at Ford's," p. 99.

<sup>121</sup>Review, "Forest Ranger," n.p.

<sup>122</sup>R. H. Gardner, "Postscript to a Review," The Sun, March 10, 1972, n.p.

"Park Service Censoring Mencken?"<sup>123</sup> and "National Park Service tries toning down Menckenisms."<sup>124</sup>

Finally, however, after the show closed, Shyre began to rewrite the material while looking for another actor. At the time, James Whitmore, who was about to go out on tour with Will Rogers' U.S.A., wanted to do Rogers one night and Mencken the other, but the producers thought the shows would work better as two separate tours.

Shyre received help in revision from an unexpected source. During the Washington production he had received a personal letter from Mrs. Charles Lappin, whose sister was secretary to H. L. Mencken for several years. The letter recounted their attendance at the Washington performance and included three pages of suggestions about how the production might be improved. Most ideas seemed constructive and well explained. Several dealt with possible ways of working out better transitions from one subject to another. She suggested that Shyre write the script so as to let him be interrupted by a phone call from "one of Mencken's authors, and he had many brilliant ones, Mencken could say to the caller whatever was on his mind about writers. . . . The audience overhears what

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<sup>123</sup>Tom Shales, "Censoring Mencken?" The Washington Post, March 8, 1972, n.p.

<sup>124</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #2.



Mencken is saying to him."<sup>125</sup> Further, Lappin suggested physical movement as a device for changing subjects rather than a statement such as, "Well, enough of that," which she said was "not characteristic" of Mencken at all. "A retreat to the easy chair would be more natural and convincing."<sup>126</sup>

The other major suggestion Lappin made in her letter was that Shyre work on showing Mencken's side of things.

Mencken had reason to be annoyed as he was often misrepresented, his style imitated in the very same articles which castigated him, and made the target for often libelous writings. To leave these things out of Mencken on stage makes of him a common scold, and not a man of good judgment.<sup>127</sup>

She felt the show encouraged defense mechanisms to build up in the audience which, "we all possess when we cannot accept the attack."<sup>128</sup> Whether Shyre used these comments when he was rewriting the script is not known, but it seems plausible that he did because the next time the Mencken show was revived it met with a generally improved reaction.

Cherry Lane Theatre, New York City, 1974. The first thing to be noted here is that the show was

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<sup>125</sup>Letter from Mrs. Charles F. Lappin, sister to H. L. Mencken's secretary and contributor to the journal Menckenia, Letter dated March 12, 1972.

<sup>126</sup>Letter from Mrs. Lappin, March 12, 1972.

<sup>127</sup>Letter from Mrs. Lappin, March 12, 1972.

<sup>128</sup>Letter from Mrs. Lappin, March 12, 1972.

rewritten and was now titled, Blasts and Bravos, An Evening with H. L. Mencken. Shyre himself decided to play Mencken. As he put it in his article:

More time passed and I finally decided I would take a stab at it myself in a small off-Broadway theater. I got some producers [Edgar Lansbury and Joseph Beruh] interested in the project and began rehearsals with it a year ago November. It was very difficult! I thought I had a director who was going to work with me. Unfortunately he was unable to do it. The rehearsals were very difficult. An actor friend, James Coco, came down to rehearsals and was very helpful with me. Eldon Elton (sic) [Eldon Elder] did the set and we put some music in [Robert Rines] and, through the grace of God, good luck, and what have you, we got some very good reviews. It seemed to have caught on.<sup>129</sup>

Blasts and Bravos opened at the Cherry Lane Theatre January 16, 1975, and closed February 23 of that same year after 46 performances. The critical response to this new production was mixed but did tend to be much more favorable than those for its last outing in Washington. Leonard Probst of NBC radio said it was "an enriching experience to be exposed to Mencken's wit and wisdom. A comfortable show, an enriching show, not a great one, just good."<sup>130</sup> Alvin Klein of WNYC radio in New York City said,

Paul Shyre has made a career of adapting for the stage the works or just the collected words of writers and performers from Whitman to O'Casey to Will Rogers. He's now doing a number on H. L. Mencken. Not only as adaptor and director, but as performer as well. Such one-man endeavors bore us more often than they stimulate. For there isn't

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<sup>129</sup>Shyre, "Mencken," pp. 5-6.

<sup>130</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #2.

very much theatrical possibility in them and the standard argument that you might just as well stay home and read whoever it is at your own pace, is usually a valid one. But wait. Shyre's Mencken show . . . is a pleasant exception. If only because the actor's low-keyed approach enables us to find a key to the humanity in a man who lashed out at everything, humorously and severely.<sup>131</sup>

The above statement, especially the last sentence, seems to provide fairly solid evidence that Shyre had taken the advice in Lappin's letter of 1972 and had achieved some of what she suggested. Shyre had integrated more of Mencken's side of things, his humanity, into this later production. This balance gave the show more complexity and a stronger sense of reality. Shows with overt themes of socio-religious protest may emphasize the propaganda. As Lappin said, she found the first Shyre adaptation of the Mencken materials a bit more a rhetorical tirade than an experience with the writings and thoughts of Mencken.

Other reviews were mixed.<sup>132</sup> The New Yorker was particularly straightforward in its criticism of the production:

Thanks to a mixup, I arrived late at the opening of Paul Shyre's Blasts and Bravos: An Evening with H. L. Mencken, at the Cherry Lane, and perhaps it was just as well--a whole evening of Mencken, or of his particular impersonation of Mencken, would be pretty hard for me to sit through. Any one-man show presents difficulties, and if the subject is neither a professional entertainer, like Mark Twain or Sara

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<sup>131</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #1

<sup>132</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 13, Env. #1.

Bernhardt, not a courtroom showoff, like Clarence Darrow, the biographical material available for dramaturgic purposes is apt to use itself up with disconcerting speed.<sup>133</sup>

The review further indicated that, as far as the reviewer was concerned, the endless devices used to keep the show moving grew less and less believable as time passed.

Mr. Shyre is an old pro and can be counted on to keep his little playlet in seeming motion even when nothing of importance is happening: he guzzles beer, he snaps his red suspenders, he pulls a book off a shelf, he fiddles with cigars and eyeglasses. Soon enough one perceives that there is scarcely any trick he "won't" stoop to play, including a hint that a call of nature is the reason for an intermission between acts.<sup>134</sup>

This reviewer went on to fault the show for reasons exactly opposite those offered by others who had faulted the first show. He said that Shyre's latest production did not show Mencken as he really was, but tended to soft-pedal the extremely outspoken Baltimore newspaper man. So, while Lappin may have considered this revision a truer picture of the Mencken she knew, others were not satisfied that Shyre had created as honest a portrait of Mencken as they felt he should have. However, unlike many of the New York reviewers, Mrs. Lappin and her sister had known Mencken personally. Because they had opportunity for closer and more accurate insights

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<sup>133</sup>Review, "The Theatre: Off Broadway," The New Yorker, January 17, 1975, pp. 69-70.

<sup>134</sup>Review, "The Theatre:" pp. 69-70.

into the real Mencken, their views may be more reliable than those of critics who only knew him from his writings and reputation. Some critics may have even been prejudiced against the man and his outspoken material. In any case, the reviews for this production were more favorable than the Washington reviews, and Shyre did produce the Mencken show at least one other time.

S.S. Rotterdam, 1975, enroute to Venezuela. Probably the most unusual performance of any of Shyre's works was done aboard the cruise ship, S.S. Rotterdam, enroute from New York City through Ft. Lauderdale to Venezuela. As Shyre explained it,

Recently, together with about fourteen other actors and actresses, I took part in performing in the theater of a cruise ship to Venezuela. I was asked to do Mencken. Some of the performers on board were Lillian Gish, Cyril Ritchard, Lynn Redgrave, Mildred Natwick. It was quite an imposing list.<sup>135</sup>

Shyre's performance was presented at 8:15 and 10:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 27, 1975. Shyre said that although Cyril Ritchard was the master of ceremonies for all of the performances done on the cruise, he did not want to introduce the Mencken show. Shyre said his reason was that he was a devout Catholic and felt it might compromise his faith, so Shyre got Lillian Gish to introduce him because she had known Mencken. The cruise audience was an older group, and Shyre indicated that it had been

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<sup>135</sup>Shyre, "Mencken," p. 7.

difficult for some of the performers in past shows on board to keep them all awake.

Well, the curtain went up and I started in as Mencken talking about [my] likes and dislikes. And the audience stayed awake for the entire show . . . some were quite shocked that such material would be allowed . . . for a captive audience, so to speak.<sup>136</sup>

Shyre concluded his description of the production saying that many, including Ritchard and the ship's captain, complimented the performance, if not all the material.<sup>137</sup>

### Paris Was Yesterday

In 1921 a woman called Janet Flanner went to Paris and four years later started to write home about her experience in a magazine called The New Yorker. Both she and the magazine were in many ways extraordinary.<sup>138</sup>

Paul Shyre's third adaptation for a one-person show was based on the life and writings of Janet Flanner. The reviews explain that she wrote her column "for more than half a century under the nom de plume Genet. . . ."<sup>139</sup> She provided readers of The New Yorker with an account "of Paris as it existed from day to day in its ravishing hurly-burly of shops, cafes, art galleries,

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<sup>136</sup>Shyre, "Mencken," p. 7.

<sup>137</sup>Shyre, "Mencken," p. 7.

<sup>138</sup>Clive Barnes, "Holm Impeccable as Janet Flanner," The New York Post, December 20, 1979, n.p.

<sup>139</sup>James Atlas, "Stage: Celeste Holm as Janet Flanner," The New York Times, December 20, 1979, Sec. III, p. 15, col. 1.

bookstalls, and fishermen along quais. . . ."140 Brendan Gill said that Flanner gave her readers a Paris

. . . of her imagination--a heightened and intensified Paris. . . . She wrote superbly about people--her sedulously rendered portraits of Matisse, Picasso, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Gertrude Stein, among hundreds of others, are indispensable to historians of the period.141

Clive Barnes revealed that, almost before anyone else, Flanner "saw the dangerous littleness of Adolf Hitler. . . ."142 William A. Raidy called Janet Flanner "the master of the epistolary style of journalism."143 Her column, entitled "Letter from Paris," monitored the Paris scene from 1925 onward to 1974, reporting on the latest shows at the Folies Bergere, the "theatre historique" at the Elysee Palace, and people such as "Lucky Lindy" and Charles De Gaulle.144 From the amount of material and the popularity of the subject, one can assume Shyre had again selected someone who had broad appeal, especially to New York audiences.

Premiere performance, George Street Playhouse, 1978

The first engagement of Paris Was Yesterday opened at the George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick, New

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<sup>140</sup>Brendan Gill, "Love in the Dark," The New Yorker, December 31, 1979, p. 47.

<sup>141</sup>Gill, "Love in the Dark," p. 47.

<sup>142</sup>Barnes, "Holm Impeccable," n.p.

<sup>143</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 15, folder #5.

<sup>144</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 15, folder #5.

Jersey, on February 17, 1978. The George Street Playhouse, according to a book called Theatre Profiles, was committed to the "production of a wide mixture of plays, including new scripts, classics, and popular contemporary works."<sup>145</sup> The 1977-1978 production schedule illustrated this commitment with the production of The Rainmaker by N. Richard Nash, Steamboat by Bruce J. Friedman, Man and Superman by G. B. Shaw, Paris Was Yesterday by Paul Shyre, Serenading Louis by Langford Wilson, and Arsenic and Old Lace by Joseph Kesselring. For several seasons they had presented two world premieres per season. Shyre's Paris Was Yesterday was one of these world premieres. The only review found for this production was in Variety. The review was very much like many that were to come after the New York opening over a year later. Much of the review was spent explaining Flanner's work and her Paris friends, not separable items, since her friends often were her work, or at least writing about them was. The review picked out the flaw that might be the most repeated indictment of any show of this kind: "it appears to suffer from a lack of personal identity. The audience is exposed to colorful name dropping, but little is revealed about the author herself."<sup>146</sup> Similar comments about the lack

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<sup>145</sup>David Skal, ed., Theatre Profiles, Vol. 4 (New York: Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 1979), p. 56.

<sup>146</sup>Review, "Shows Out of Town: Paris Was Yesterday," Variety, March 1, 1978, n.p.



of wholeness were made about the Mencken show; however, the Rogers show generally fared better with the critics in this area. It seems that what the reviewers are judging here is really the fundamental question of adapting from letters or other biographical sources even if they are written as articles for The New Yorker. The problem that immediately arises is how to unify bits and pieces of a person's writing in an attempt to show the person with some reality, particularly when dealing with a somewhat self-effacing journalist for The New Yorker.

The review did credit Celeste Holm's performance with

. . . warmth and conviction to the piece, transforming the play into an informal gathering of old friends. At the opening night performance, however, the presence of Flanner in the audience may have created a sense of self-consciousness.<sup>147</sup>

He did say the adaptation had possibilities for touring and playing on Broadway.

Harold Clurman Theatre, New York City, 1979.

Paris Was Yesterday opened in New York City on December 19, 1979, and closed January 6, 1980, after a limited engagement. "Despite the freezing snow, Paris Was Yesterday . . . opened . . . at the warm and cozy Harold Clurman Theatre."<sup>148</sup> The show had problems both in script and staging. One reviewer objected to the use of slides.

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<sup>147</sup>Review, "Paris," Variety, March 1, 1978, n.p.

<sup>148</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 15, folder #5.

As Miss Holm tells her stories, we see pictures flashed on the back of the set. Although this was interesting initially, after about twenty minutes it began to feel as if we were in a history class in school because the play lacked a sense of drama. Rather than thinking, "Who will she describe next?" we found ourselves hoping that the bell would ring for recess.<sup>149</sup>

The reviewer also said that although Holm's performance was competent, it lacked theatrical magnetism, "therefore we felt as if she was just reciting."<sup>150</sup> Further he suggested that the material be shortened and that something be done with the script to help the audience in some real understanding of this "active but lonely woman"<sup>151</sup> without having to tell us directly, as it was done in the show. Glen Currie concluded his review for United Press International in a similar manner: "Celeste Holm could do much better than this if director-adapter Paul Shyre had provided a less superficial script."<sup>152</sup> Another reviewer, Frank Lipsius, agreed, saying,

Having extracted most of the autobiographical material from dispatches that were rarely autobiographical, the reminiscence deteriorates into name dropping, self-absorption, unrelieved by the intrusion of an unexplained but obviously upsetting phone call and subsequent parting note from an unnamed friend.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>149</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 15, folder #5.

<sup>150</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 15, folder #5.

<sup>151</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 15, folder #5.

<sup>152</sup>Glen Currie, "Paris Was Yesterday," United Press International, December 26, 1979.

<sup>153</sup>Frank Lipsius, "California Comes to Broadway's Air," Financial Times, December 28, 1979, n.p.

The idea of using phone call interruptions for the Flanner show may well come from the suggestion Lippin had made to Shyre for the Mencken show, but this cannot be documented. The slides mentioned in this production were only large pictures placed on an easel for the New Brunswick, New Jersey premiere, but many of the reviewers who saw this show found the Paris Hotel room set fine and the slides all right. For them the major fault of the show was that the material simply did not "capture the quality of writing Flanner contributed to The New Yorker as their Paris correspondent for 50 years."<sup>154</sup>

However, it should be noted that some New York reviewers might not have liked any show about Flanner, since she was so highly regarded, and was a sort of journalistic heroine for one of the most prestigious magazines in the nation. "The charming and gifted Celeste Holm grapples earnestly with this ungrateful material."<sup>155</sup> Martin Gottfried went on, "Directing his own production, Shyre adds bewildering touches in search of drama, such as having Flanner/Holm twice interrupt her monologue with mysterious phone calls. But the mystery isn't explained, which is typical of the evening's thrills."<sup>156</sup> Gottfried

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<sup>154</sup>Lipsius, "California," n.p.

<sup>155</sup>Martin Gottfried, "Paris Was Yesterday," Cue, January 18, 1980, n.p.

<sup>156</sup>Gottfried, "Paris Was Yesterday," n.p.

also called the adaptation superficial and filled with gossip and name-dropping with no insight into the people discussed and less into Flanner. Perhaps Jacques le Sourd did the best job of analyzing the problem objectively:

There are innate problems in the solo genre, and there are particular difficulties in this case because of the nature of Flanner's work: It was by design, 'impersonal' journalism which though it obviously reflected the perspective of the reporter, aimed at an "objective" view.<sup>157</sup>

He went on to say that Flanner's writings were often distanced or detached and "most assuredly 'not' self-revelatory. . . ." <sup>158</sup> Le Sourd further classed Shyre's adaptation as clumsy, citing an instance that is repeatedly mentioned in other reviews, but more explicitly detailed here. "Shyre has Miss Holm conduct--in French--a frantic telephone conversation with a lover, begging the person not to leave her. Later, she makes another frantic call to a hotel and is told her lover is gone." He explained, "It isn't a secret--though Flanner herself dealt with the matter with utter discretion--that her lovers were female."<sup>159</sup> As far as le Sourd was concerned, these "fevered phone calls [even in French, which may explain why they are a mystery to other reviewers] are silly, they illustrate little, and they undercut the character's

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<sup>157</sup>Jacques le Sourd, "Paris Was Yesterday: A Fond Memoir of the Past," Gannett Westchester Newspapers, December 20, 1979, n.p.

<sup>158</sup>le Sourd, "Fond Memoir," n.p.

<sup>159</sup>le Sourd, "Fond Memoir," n.p.

enormous dignity."<sup>160</sup> However, in the end le Sourd did admit that Shyre's show might serve as "a Flanner sampler" encouraging the audience to read more of her journalism, which was in his estimation, "journalism elevated to the level of art."<sup>161</sup> Not all of the reviews were negative. At least three would have to be considered favorable.

One of the positive reviews has already been touched on, that of The New Yorker magazine by Brendan Gill. A second favorable review was written by Emory Lewis. In his review headlined, "Celeste Holm in a captivating solo,"<sup>162</sup> he said,

The one-person show is becoming increasingly popular. Tom Taylor is currently impersonating the famed folk singer in Woody Guthrie at the Cherry Lane Theater. Pat Carroll is alone on stage in "Gertrude Stein, Gertrude Stein, Gertrude Stein" at the Provincetown Playhouse.<sup>163</sup>

(Both of these would be additions to the one-person show list mentioned earlier in this study.) As critical as the other reviews were, it is difficult to believe that these last reviewers saw the same show. Lewis termed Celeste Holm's performance "a magical solo . . . a captivating and vivid portrait of a remarkable journalist, Janet Flanner."<sup>164</sup> This praise certainly does not sound

<sup>160</sup>le Sourd, "Fond Memoir," n.p.

<sup>161</sup>le Sourd, "Fond Memoir," n.p.

<sup>162</sup>Emory Lewis, "Celeste Holm in a Captivating Solo," The Record, December 20, 1979, n.p.

<sup>163</sup>Lewis, "Captivating Solo," n.p.

<sup>164</sup>Lewis, "Captivating Solo," n.p.

like what Don Nelsen said in his review for the Daily News. He assailed Holm's performance saying,

Yet, the most bothersome aspect of the production is that most of the time Holm seems to be "acting" Flanner rather than "being" Flanner. She has certain little tricks that keep popping up . . . to inform the audience that what might seem serious is really funny.<sup>165</sup>

Nelsen did concede that there were moments when Holm was better than others but would never have described the performance as "magic." On the other hand, Lewis said Holm was the perfect choice to portray Flanner and that she had "expertly captured Miss Flanner's mannerisms and speech patterns, with more than a touch of Midwestern heartiness [Flanner was born in Indianapolis]."<sup>166</sup> Clive Barnes also praised the performance, but even more interesting was something he said about this genre of theatre while commenting on this particular show:

This singular reporter has now been transfigured, very persuasively, into a one-woman show by that expert in the form, Paul Shyre. The essence of success in this impersonation act--this taking a character for recreation--is total honesty. We need to have our beliefs confirmed, and to be assured that we knew what we thought we knew.

With Janet Flanner the difficulties are not really of literal impersonation. I met her briefly, in total homage. But few people have a concept of what she looked like or any of her specific mannerisms. This gives total freedom

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<sup>165</sup>Don Nelsen, "Cuts, Rehearsals Could Help," The Daily News, December 20, 1979, n.p.

<sup>166</sup>Lewis, "Captivating Solo," n.p.

to the actress portraying her--a freedom that our present actress, Celeste Holm, gloriously takes.<sup>167</sup>

The most fascinating thing about this comment was Barnes' mention of the audience's expectations from their own preconceptions of the person being performed in the one-person show. If a critic were preoccupied with the person instead of the material presented, this focus could have had a negative influence on his or her reaction to the entire show. These expectations may have been part of the problem with the Mencken show and certainly might account for some of the reaction to the Flanner show. If there was no strong reaction against the Will Rogers show, it may have been because the "expectations" Barnes refers to were generally met. Also, Mencken and Flanner were journalists and Rogers was an entertainer. Because Rogers had a much higher visibility with regard to his public, they might have had a more correct concept of his image; whereas, a journalist like Flanner or Mencken would be less visible with images based on their writings and hearsay. This difference might have made it more difficult to meet the audiences' preconceived notions about the person portrayed in the one-person show.

#### Ah, Men

The last adaptation to be documented in this study was adapted by Paul Shyre from the written works, public

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<sup>167</sup>Barnes, "Holm Impeccable," n.p.

quotations, interviews, and other writings from men such as the following: Groucho Marx, George Bernard Shaw, Henry Miller, Lucky Luciano, Rudolph Valentino, Bertrand Russell, Clifford Irving, Tommy Trantino, Sean O'Casey, Ned Rorem, Art Buchwald, D. H. Lawrence, Frank Harris, George Burns, Sherwood Anderson, Arthur Schopenhauer, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, August Strindberg, Eugene O'Neill, Lenny Bruce, Malcolm Muggeridge, Ayatollah Khomeini, George Jean Nathan, and others. When Shyre was asked what had prompted the idea for this script, he replied,

At the time I noticed there were quite a few plays and films and teledramas all dealing with women's liberation, and it was my idea to do a piece which dealt basically with men's liberation, as seen through the works of prominent male authors and writers and thinkers from the past right up to the present.<sup>168</sup>

Shyre described the different elements of this production,

It was a very simple set with moveable pieces and there were four actors [one an actress] in the cast. On stage right was a sort of podium with a large, comfortable chair in which the narrator, who was a woman played by Jane White, introduced and commented on the scenes. . . .

Shyre added,

There were three male actors who played out the various roles. There was a certain amount of dance and choreography involved, and there were several songs written by Will Holt which were interspersed throughout the production.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>168</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 9.

<sup>169</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 10.



The songs included in the show were, "Ah, Men," "Man Is For Woman Made," "When You Pass My Door," "My First," "The Last Minute Waltz," "Truck Stop," "Illusions," and "Daddy Blues."

This musical revue adapted by Shyre opened May 11, 1981, at the South Street Theatre, Off-Broadway and closed May 24, 1981, after only fourteen performances. As Shyre said, "The result . . . the response to it was, I would say, lukewarm; it was not tremendous."<sup>170</sup> Analyzing why it had not been as successful as he had hoped, Shyre concluded,

I think the problem was I had set out to do it as a strictly simple, dramatic piece with lecterns and stools, and it developed into a sort of musical, whereas I felt the songs and the dances--my whole concept seemed to have disappeared as a result of it. But the reception was lukewarm.<sup>171</sup>

The unpublished manuscript for this production can be seen at the Mugar Library, Boston University, but a small portion of the opening is included here to give an idea of the way this compiled script was adapted by Shyre.

#### ACT I

The cast consists of THREE ACTORS and a FEMALE NARRATOR. The THREE ACTORS should be varied in type, i.e., cultured British accent to American Bronx. The NARRATOR sits separate from the OTHERS, on a stool, a lectern in front

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<sup>170</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 10.

<sup>171</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 10.

of it, holding the script. The narration should be done by a WOMAN. Her comments are always strictly from the female point of view, and though SHE will make many ironic comments, SHE is never condescending or patronizing. The setting is simple, stools and chairs, screens, a prop table that contains some costume pieces, etc. The MEN are uniformly dressed in strictly formal attire: top hats, canes, white ties. THEY enter through the screens at the opening and do a chorus of the song "BIG MAN".

COMPANY

I WAS A BIG MAN YESTERDAY  
 BUT BOY, YOU OUGHTA SEE ME NOW.  
 A-WELL, I TALKED BIG YESTERDAY,  
 BUT BOY, YOU OUGHTA SEE ME NOW.  
 I BRAGGED TOO LONG THAT YOUR LOVE WAS STRONG,  
 THERE'D NEVER BE ANOTHER GUY,  
 BUT YOU SAID MORE WHEN YOU WHISPERED YOUR GOODBYE.  
 I WAS A BIG MAN YESTERDAY,  
 BUT BOY, YOU OUGHTA SEE ME NOW!

(After the song THEY seat themselves,  
 as the light comes up on the NARRATOR)

NARRATOR

Good evening, and welcome to the world of men. Not mankind, just man, or men. This is a play about men, not as they should be or, for that matter, even want to be. It's about their flaws, their foolishness, their power, and their lack of power. Consult any leading dictionary and you'll find some strange definitions. Here are some: MAN . . . a husband or lover, the head of a coin in tossing, an exclamatory form of address in common use all over South Africa, and so forth. There are many expressions in which the word Man is used. For instance, the man in the street, the man in the moon, or a man box . . . an old expression for a coffin. Then, of course, there is a man-trap, which actually refers to the female pudenda, of all things. So you see, MAN can mean many things. Tonight we'll be dealing with the five most common forms of men . . . Sons, Brothers, Lovers, Husbands, and Fathers. There will be a song or two as we go along, and I shall be here to keep a sane hold on things as we observe how men comes to terms with their own maleness as they move through the time as

Sons, Brothers, Lovers, Husbands, and Fathers. And, perhaps, when we've finished you may come to a better understanding of these creatures known as:

PLAYER A  
Bloses.

PLAYER B

Ducks.

PLAYER C

Buggers.

NARRATOR

Mugs.

PLAYER C

Messieurs.

PLAYER B

Signorinos.

PLAYER A

Chanticleers.

NARRATOR

Peacocks.

PLAYER B

Stallions.

PLAYER C

Bucks.

PLAYER B

Geldings.

PLAYER A

Stags.

NARRATOR

And cock-a-doodle doos! So here they are. The latest models, all sizes and shapes, for better and for worse. Let us begin with Part One: Sons.

George Bernard Shaw was never quite sure what kind of son he was. To him a mother was not a person to lean on, but a person to make leaning unnecessary. I couldn't agree with him more.<sup>172</sup>

This adaptation remained stylistically consistent with Shyre's past work in this area. In fact, it was an excellent example of many of the generally accepted approaches to adaptation of a compiled script. The prologue to orient the audience and provide the parameters for the adaptation, the use of definition as a bridge to the rest of the material, the clear delineation of the

<sup>172</sup>Shyre Collection, Box 14, folder #5.

sections into Sons, etc., and the split, quick-paced dialogue in the script are all recognized techniques used in adapting compiled scripts. The script then expressed what different sons felt about being sons, brothers' feelings about being brothers, etc. The adaptation, which was billed as "a series of reflections on 'the male experience,'" <sup>173</sup> might have been even closer to Shyre's vision if it had retained the simpler design he indicated was lost by the addition of the dance and songs. It does seem that his use of these elements in the past had been subordinated to the script and in this case they seem to have taken a larger place in the performance. Whether it was enough to change the thrust of the production cannot be determined here.

This period of Shyre's work includes his successful productions of several one-person shows, e.g., Will Rogers' U.S.A. and An Unpleasant Evening with H. L. Mencken. Paris Was Yesterday found a mixed response most probably because of the reasons Shyre mentioned in the Interview. But on the whole these one-person shows, especially Will Rogers' U.S.A., which was Shyre's most financially successful endeavor during the period, found a favorable response. Even the Mencken show became popular after what was an unfavorable beginning. All of these

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<sup>173</sup> Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., Best Plays of 1980-1981 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1981), pp. 31, 421, 422.

shows were fully staged productions. Each setting, as Shyre indicated, was an attempt to place a real person in the environment he or she lived in, which was a different conceptual approach to the staging from the one Shyre had used with earlier group performances where more was left to the imagination of the viewer.

Although the group performances for this period continued to be experimental, at times they reverted to the earliest staging techniques of the "readers theatre style," e.g., New York, New York. But generally the group performances, The President is Dead and Ah, Men, were produced with more spectacle, movement, and in the case of The President is Dead, with an extremely large cast, which was a digression from Shyre's earlier ideas on casting and staging.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to document, describe, order, and examine Paul Shyre's contribution to the professional performance of non-dramatic literature from 1954-1981. Shyre is a total theatrical personality with credits as director, producer, actor, playwright, and adapter. This study documents only a part of his multi-faceted career, his professional achievement in the field of oral performance of literary texts, or oral interpretation.

Shyre thinks of himself as a theatre person, as do many of his colleagues. No one ever refers to him as a literary person or as one associated with oral interpretation. Nevertheless, he has gained a solid reputation for his ability to adapt, direct and perform works of literature without converting them to plays. He is the most prolific person in professional theatre to contribute to this kind of performance from 1954-1981. Furthermore, his comments indicate that he recognizes the distinction between adaptation and performance of literature as literature and adaptation of literature into plays. Shyre's voluntary work with the Poetry Center reflects a creative interest in oral performance that goes beyond the commercial theatre. Shyre has said that he did the O'Casey

novels because they were something he had a feeling for, and with similar feeling he has continued to produce successful, professional performances of non-dramatic literature.

The examination of the record of this part of his career leads to several conclusions. First, though he has created adaptations for a variety of performance styles, he has throughout his career continued to create scripts for performance as "readers theatre," or that performance style which often includes the use of stools, stands, scripts, limited physical movement and non-specific costumes and settings. Because of the simplicity in staging, many of these early works were referred to as "concert readings." The reason for this terminology may be explained, in part, by a footnote in Coger and White's Readers Theatre Handbook. The footnote speaks of the Brechtian idea of "bringing the quality of a 'concert'" to the theatrical production. Included in this idea was the use of "alienating devices" such as a narrator or grand pianos on stage.<sup>1</sup> The adjustable stands used in many of Shyre's productions tend to support the idea of a concert and the presence of scripts the idea of a musical score that would be the basis for the performance. Even the stools, although they were often taller than

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<sup>1</sup>Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White, Readers Theatre Handbook (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973), p. 29.

orchestra chairs, give further evidence of the idea of a concert where artists often sit while performing.

Even when the staging became more complicated, the lighting more intricate, the use of music and dance more elaborate, Shyre's production style remained, in his words, simple.

The important thing about all the O'Casey readings was that they were done as simply as possible. No attempt was made to visually enhance what O'Casey effectively wrote in his own dialogue and what the actors through their performing could create on stage. So the keynote to it, although it sounds simplistic I suppose, is that they [the O'Casey adaptations] were done without much artifice whatsoever. The only thing intruding in the evening was the use of the flute, the singing, and expert lighting. [This last sentence refers specifically to Drums Under the Windows, although music was a part of all the O'Casey productions.]<sup>2</sup>

Almost all of the professional group performances of non-dramatic literature Shyre produced were staged in this relatively simple manner. The O'Casey adaptations, at least the first two, follow closely the "stools, stands, and scripts" staging used in Don Juan in Hell. Drums Under the Windows moves toward a higher definition performance style, but there is no consistent progression from lower definition performances to higher ones because, although Shyre experiments a great deal, and this experimentation usually involves elements of higher definition, he often returns to the initial concept of a "readers theatre style" in later productions, e.g., New York, New

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<sup>2</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 21.



York, Yeats and Company. More than once Shyre has indicated a mild disappointment with those productions that he felt ended up over-staged, e.g., Ah, Men. His preference, at least in the group performances, was simplicity. This practice was an effort to foreground the text and allow it to evoke the images, build the sets, and in other ways provide the spectacle for the audience.

Shyre's initial ideas about group performance of non-dramatic materials were influenced by his educational environment, his contact with certain New York "readers theatre" productions and the production styles that were present in those performances. These influences were basic to the "vision" that guided Shyre in most of his work with the adaptation and production of professional performance of non-dramatic literature. The primary stylistic influences on these early works came from Shyre's seeing the group reading of Don Juan in Hell. Although this particular reading was a "dramatic piece" which required minimal cutting and adaptation of the script, Shyre saw in the production stylistic elements of simplicity that were to influence the staging in much of his later work.

Second, Shyre's performances of literature were commercially successful. The key reason is that he combined his appreciation for works of "literary value" with his strong sense for what might be "commercially successful." Shyre's fourteen adaptations, The Theatre

of Mr. Poe, I Knock at the Door, Pictures in the Hallway, I Hear America Singing, U.S.A., Drums Under the Windows, Yeats and Company, A Whitman Portrait, Will Rogers' U.S.A., The President is Dead, New York, New York, An Unpleasant Evening with H. L. Mencken, Paris Was Yesterday, and Ah, Men, have logged hundreds of performances in the years from 1954 through 1981.

For instance, after a successful opening at the Kaufmann Auditorium in New York City, Shyre's adaptation of I Knock at the Door was produced in at least six other major engagements from 1956 to 1965, including such notable theatres as the Belasco Theatre, Imperial Theatre, and Theatre de Lys, all major theaters in New York City. In 1960, the noted UCLA Theatre Group, then under the artistic direction of John Houseman, selected both of the initial O'Casey adaptations I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway for special back to back performances. This is just one example of the insight Shyre has shown for the selection of good material that was also capable of achieving commercial success. One of the most competitive businesses in the United States is the New York theatre. There are a limited number of established theatres that can be occupied in any given season. In some way, whether the Shyre production was successful or unsuccessful, it would still be noteworthy simply because of the limited number of shows that can be booked into any one of these major American theatres. As Shyre put

it, "Being able to survive in this business and go through your life doing it. That in itself is an accomplishment."<sup>3</sup>

Shyre has continued to gain this much sought after space, often for extended periods of time, presenting materials that formerly were not considered for dramatic production.

The commercial success is further evidenced by the fact that many of Shyre's adaptations of non-dramatic materials including, U.S.A., Pictures in the Hallway, Drums Under the Windows, A Whitman Portrait, and I Knock at the Door have been published by major New York publishers. The sales records for these scripts and production permissions were not available for use in this study, but it is likely that they would have provided even more evidence of additional performances, further confirming the commercial popularity of Shyre's adaptations.

Third, in addition to his commercial success, Shyre's performances of literature have received approval from educational institutions where theatre would be considered only one of many other academic disciplines. Examples of this would include his teaching and directing opportunities at institutions such as Cornell University, Swarthmore, and U.C.L.A.

This work has also received recognition outside the academic world. Shyre has received grants, awards, and commissions for his work from the professional theatre,

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<sup>3</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 7.

councils interested in the advancement of the Arts and Humanities, and educational institutions. In 1957 he received a special Village Voice Off-Broadway (Obie) Award for U.S.A. and the next year Shyre was honored with a Vernon Rice Drama Desk Award for his general work in the theatre. This was followed, in the same year, by the Brandeis University Creative Arts Award for the young person coming up in theatre who shows greatest promise. Shyre was also nominated for an Antoinette Perry (Tony) Award for his work of the O'Casey autobiographies. The 1966 tour of Pictures in the Hallway received funds for the tour, at least the New York State part of the tour, from the New York State Council on the Arts through that council's Professional Touring Performing Arts Program. I Hear America Singing, A Whitman Portrait, New York, New York, and Yeats and Company were all commission works that Shyre was asked to adapt primarily on the basis of the reputation he had gained as an adapter. Though people who commissioned Shyre as an adapter were also aware that he was capable of directing and performing in the works himself, Shyre was most often recognized for his ability in the area of adaptation. Further, he was often praised for his editing of literary texts without doing harm to the original materials. Even when the commission did not require his talent as performer or director, Shyre still used his knowledge from the related areas of performing and directing in the work of adapting. In other words,

his sense for the dramatic has been coupled with an equally acute sense for the job of careful adaptation. An article by Carol Eisenberg entitled, "A Star But Still Striving," for the Ithaca Journal, February 25, 1980, applauded Shyre's

. . . brilliant editing of the O'Casey autobiographies . . . which have not sacrificed the quality nor the focus of the original.

Often, both on and off Broadway, the adaptation does violence to its source.

But one of the reasons Mr. Shyre has been so successful with his adaptations is that he designs them for performance as Readers' Theatre pieces rather than stage plays. Thus, often using a device of a narrator, he is able to preserve the descriptive passages, the lyrical outbursts, and the author's intriguing philosophizing which must be purged from a play.<sup>4</sup>

Fourth, Shyre's work strengthens the relationship between the academic fields of interpretation and theatre. The Shyre productions, along with others, acquainted many colleges and universities with the possibility of productions of non-dramatic literature. Shyre's teaching and directing duties afforded him the possibility of experimentation with group performance that the New York stage would not have allowed, e.g., The President Is Dead. Often what was, in actuality, a group performance of literature was considered and critiqued as a "theatrical" performance. Shyre, along with others, was instrumental in helping audiences and critics see that good group

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<sup>4</sup>Carol Eisenberg, "A Star But Still Striving," Ithaca Journal, February 25, 1980, n.p.

performance of non-dramatic materials was also good theatre and vice versa. This perception, in part, accounts for the continued growth of professional productions of non-dramatic literature, the staggering 1982 production of Charles Dickens' Nicolas Nickleby seeming to be the most notable example to date. This production further indicates the future of presentations of this type as a viable mode of professional performance that has found wide acceptance, not only in the educational theatres of colleges and universities, but, of equal importance, also in major legitimate theatres across the country.

Those interested in the group performance of non-dramatic literature are then, to some degree, indebted to Paul Shyre and others like him, who were and remain instrumental in the adaptation and professional production of this type of performance. Shyre especially enhanced the opportunities in the field, first because no other person adapted more non-dramatic material that was so widely produced during this period. Secondly, his material generated a great deal of positive critical interest thus encouraging other similar adaptations, and lastly, Shyre's work attracted some of the most influential producers and artists in the American theatre to become involved in his endeavors.

Fifth, Shyre developed and refined the concept of one-person shows like Will Rogers' U.S.A., where a single performer creates the character of and speaks the words

of a writer. The primary influence of these productions was the Charles Dickens' readings performed by Emlyn Williams that were done around the same time as the group reading of Don Juan in Hell.

Of course, Shyre credits both productions as a source of inspiration for his work in adaptation. The solo performances were consistently "higher definition" because, as Shyre put it, "you're dealing with a specific character who's in a specific environment. . . ." <sup>5</sup> Pictures in the appendix show several of these environments and at least two of the set designs, the Paris hotel room where Janet Flanner lived and the Baltimore study of H. L. Mencken. They show how specifically these environments were created. Other pictures show the costumes, hair, and make-up (although in black and white) that were used in Paris Was Yesterday, Will Rogers' U.S.A., An Unpleasant Evening with H. L. Mencken, and others.

In summary, the significance of this contribution is shown by the following: (1) the magnitude of the work Shyre produced during this period; (2) the caliber of many of the theatres that gave Shyre an opportunity to present these productions, both legitimate and college; (3) the number of times the Shyre productions were revived and toured; (4) the fact that these productions were a significant part of Shyre's commercial theatrical

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<sup>5</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 27.

income; (5) the publication of several of the scripts by the major play services; (6) the preservation of scripts that were recorded on record, e.g., Will Rogers' U.S.A. and videotape, e.g., Pictures in the Hallway; the recognition accorded Shyre by both the Lincoln Center Library and the Mugar Library at Boston University; (8) the awards that he has received for the work; (9) the notable people that have associated themselves with the work; and (10) the fact that his reputation for this type of work was significant enough to get him other adaptations to work on throughout this part of his career.

In closing it should be noted that Shyre's interest in this type of thing continues with his latest project, a script taken from the works of Eugene O'Neill.

As to future stage pieces, I have in the back of my mind now, one day I'm hoping to do a stage life of Eugene O'Neill, but it would be done through a narrative technique where people would more or less narrate--people who knew him, through their own words would create a composite picture of O'Neill. . . . In other words, it would be his wives, and the critic George G. Nathan, and several other people who knew him very well, using their words to make a sort of perhaps symphonic blend on stage, the end result being a picture of O'Neill which the audience would get, and there would be no actor there playing O'Neill--it would be all through the eyes and impressions of other people. . . . It's all now in the back of my mind.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Shyre interview, August, 1982, p. 46.



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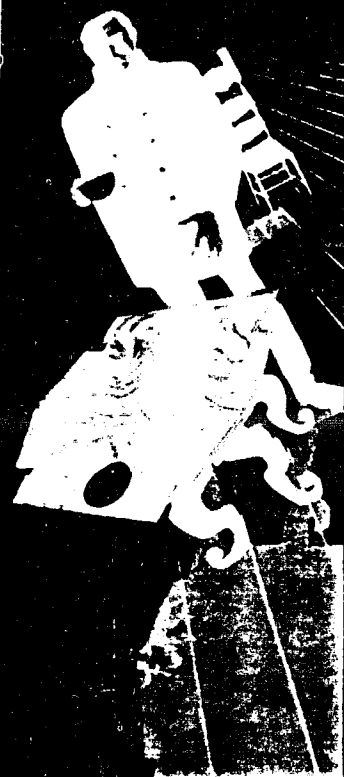
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APPENDIX A  
THE THEATRE OF MR. POE



**THE  
THEATRE  
of  
MR. POE**

**DRAMATIC NARRATIVE  
in  
TWO ACTS**

**One Of The Most  
Unusual And Entertaining  
Theatrical Productions  
Ever Presented**

**Adapted From Selected Works Of  
Edgar Allen Poe And Directed By  
PAUL SHYRE**

**SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT SERIES**  
**KANSAS STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE**  
**Pittsburg, Kansas**  
**SUMMER, 1954**



**DRAMA: Theater of Mr. Poe,**  
**Monday, June 14, 1954**

Paul Shyre and two other young professional actors—Michael Tolan and Clement Fowler—present in dramatic form a program of Edgar Allen Poe stories, including "The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether," "The Cask of Amontillado," and "The Devil in the Beifrey."

**BALLADS: Jared Reed,**  
**Tuesday, June 22, 1954**

Jared Reed, American folk singer who appeared in the New York musical "Paint Your Wagon," presents a wide variety of English and American folk songs with a guitar accompaniment which is "full-bodied and gives substance to his songs."



**PUPPETS: Llorde's Puppets,**  
**Wednesday, June 30, 1954**

Daniel Llorde, who has appeared with puppets in twenty-three motion pictures, presents his "high strung" creations in "three completely different fabulous revues"—a sophisticated program for adult audiences.

**DANCE: Percussion-Dance Trio,**  
**Wednesday, July 14, 1954**

David Naughton, dancer, David Shapiro, pianist, and Ronald Shapiro, drummer, present in solo, duet, and trio a rich variety of modern dance portraits, rarely heard French compositions for piano and jazz piano, and several full ensemble works especially created for this tour.



**Carney Hall Auditorium**

**8:15 p. m.**

*K. S. T. C. Identification Card*  
*or 50 Cents Admits*  
*Sponsored by Major Attraction Committee*

## Paul Shyre

Paul Shyre, who has adapted the works of the master story writer, Edgar Allan Poe, doubles as director and actor. Mr. Shyre, who made his debut on Broadway in "Buy Me Blue Ribbons", has appeared in more than 20 television shows. For two seasons he was director of the Lighthouse Players of the Lighthouse for the Blind.

## Michael Tolan

Michael Tolan earned a Hollywood contract while an artist-in-residence at Stanford University. He has appeared in eight motion pictures, including "The Enforcer" with Humphrey Bogart for Warner Bros., "The Savage" with Charlton Heston for Paramount, and the star-studded "Julius Caesar" for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

## Clement Fowler

Clement Fowler has been seen on Broadway in such plays as Shakespeare's "Richard II" with Maurice Evans; Jean Anouilh's "Legend of Lovers" with Dorothy McGuire; and the pre-Broadway run of "Salt of the Earth" with Teresa Wright. On television he has appeared in over 150 shows including "Studio One", "Robert Montgomery Presents", "Danger", "Suspense", "The Web", and "Big Story."

\*\*\*\*\*

Forthcoming events in the 1954 SUMMER ARTIST SERIES will include...

All State CHORAL CONCERT -- with W. H. O. "Song-fellows" Quartet -- June 23

Foreign Cinema, de Sica's "BICYCLE THIEF" and UNESCO's "WORLD WITHOUT END" -- June 30

The University of Nebraska

1954 SUMMER SESSIONS

and

THE STUDENT UNION

present

# the theatre of Mr. Poe

dramatic narrative  
in two acts

Wednesday, June sixteenth  
Nineteen hundred fifty-four  
at eight o'clock

Student Union Ballroom

APPENDIX B

I KNOCK AT THE DOOR



OPENS SUNDAY EVE., SEPT. 29

**6 WEEKS ONLY**

THRU NOV. 9



Photograph by Robert Emmett Quinn

LUCILLE LORTEL PAUL SHYRE HOWARD GOTTFRIED

present

Broadway Premiere of

**Sean O'Casey's**  
**"I Knock at the door"**

Adapted by MR. SHYRE

Directed by STUART VAUGHAN

with

ALINE STAATS  
**MAC MAHON COTSWORTH**

RAE ALLEN GEORGE BRENLIN PAUL SHYRE ROY POOLE

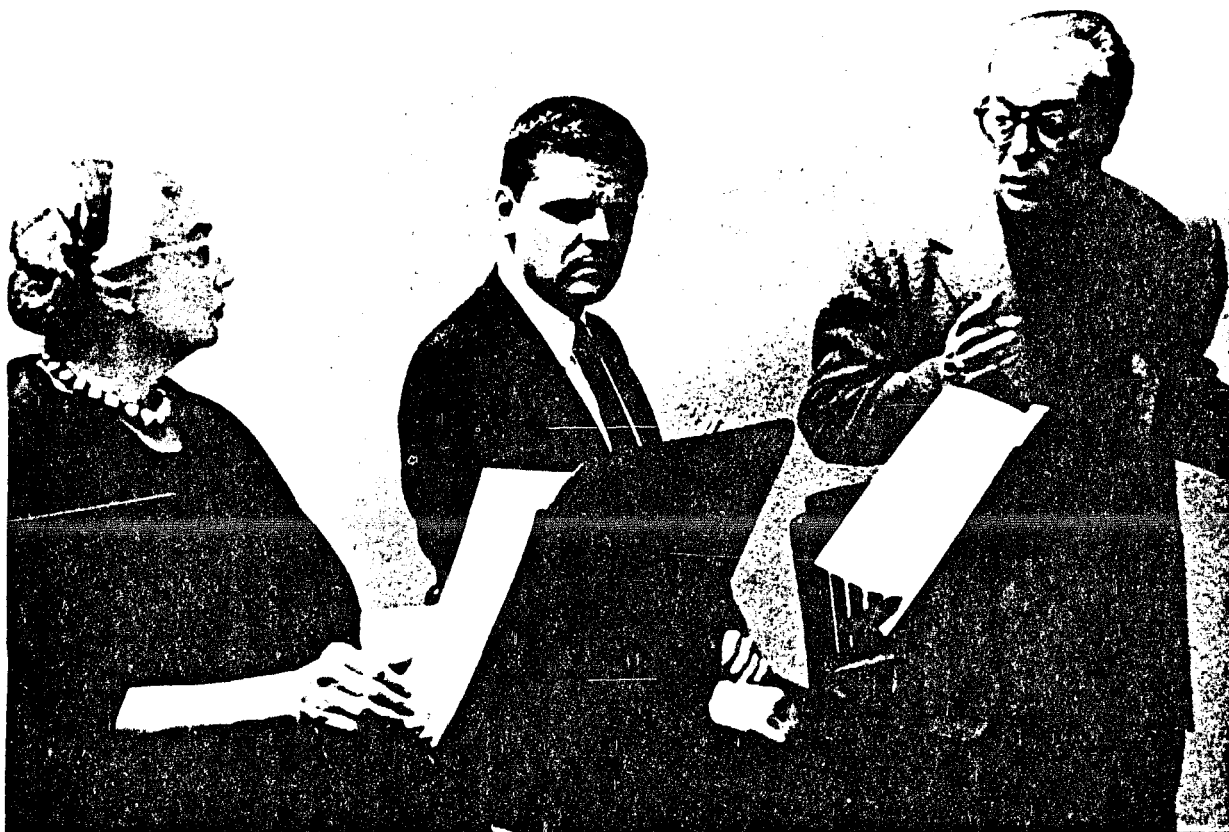
EVENINGS (including Sunday) at 8:40 p. m. — MATINEES Saturday & Sunday at 2:40 p. m.  
No Monday Performance

**BELASCO THEATRE**, 44th Street, East of Broadway



Rehearsal photograph of Aline MacMahon and Paul Shyre:

I Knock at the Door.



Rehearsal photograph of Aline MacMahon, Paul Shyre, and  
Staats Cotsworth: I Knock at the Door.



Rehearsal photograph of Aline MacMahon, Paul Shyre, and  
Staats Cotsworth: I Knock at the Door.

I Knock at the Door

Premiere performance, March 18, 1956, New York City

I Knock at the Door, a concert reading of Sean O'Casey's autobiography, adapted by Paul Shyre; staged by Stuart Vaughn; presented by Mr. Shyre and Rae Allen under the auspices of the Y.M.-Y.W.H.A. Poetry Center. At the Kaufmann Auditorium, Lexington Avenue and Ninety-second Street.

Cast of Performers

Staats Cotsworth

George Brenlin

Rae Allen

Paul Shyre

Robert Geiringer

Aline MacMahon

I Knock at the Door

New York City production, Belasco Theatre

September 29, 1957

Lighting.....Lester Polakov

Company Manager.....Joseph Roth

Stage Manager.....Robert Paschall

Flutist.....Frances Blaisdell

Cast of Performers

Stool No. 1.....Staats Cotsworth

Stool No. 2.....Roy Poole

Stool No. 3.....Paul Shyre

Stool No. 4.....Aline MacMahon

Stool No. 5.....Geogre Brenlin

Stool No. 6.....Rae Allen

## I Knock at the Door

University of California production, 1960, Los Angeles

Stage Manager.....Mark Ramsay  
 Production.....Barbara Cooper  
 Technical Operation.....Department of Central Stage  
 Flutist.....Robert Drasnin

### ABOUT THE CAST

GLADYS COOPER, British-born stage, screen and television star, has appeared in innumerable stage productions in London and New York, notably The Shining Hour, The Chalk Garden, and the recent Theatre Group production of Under Milkwood. On the screen Miss Cooper has played important roles in Rebecca, Kitty Foyle, The Hamilton Woman, Now Voyager, Song of Bernadette, Love Letters, Green Dolphin Street, etc. She has also appeared in almost every important television dramatic show.

STEPHEN JOYCE, has appeared in a wide variety of theatrical roles on and off Broadway, at La Jolla, and the Cambridge Shakespeare Festival. Frequently seen on television, audiences will remember his in Alfred Hitchcock Presents, Matinee Theatre, Navy Log, Rawhide, Omnibus, Ellery Queen, Walter Winchell File, and many others. He has appeared in several Theatre Group productions, including Murder in the Cathedral, The Three Sisters, and The Prodigal. He has just finished a Play of the Week production of Henry IV, in which he played Prince Hal.

SANDY KENYON, appeared in the Theatre Group's production of Mother Courage two summers ago, and last summer's production of The Sandbox. Previously he has worked both on and off-Broadway in numerous plays, among them Purple Dust, Pale Horse, Pale Rider, and Rocket to the Moon. His television appearances include many network shows and the part of "Des" in Crunch and Des. He was a member of The Theatre Guild Shakespearean Academy in its first year.

EVERETT SLOANE has to his theatrical credits more than twenty-five plays, including Boy Meets Girl, Room Service, A Bell for Adono (with Fredrick March), and Orson Wells' production of Native Son. He has appeared in more than 30 motion pictures, including Citizen Kane, Lady from Shanghai, Prince of Foxes, The Men, The Big Knife. Among his more than several hundred television productions are Patterns (Kraft Theatre), Van Gogh (Philco) Playhouse 90 and others too numerous to mention.

JAN STERLING began her theatrical career in Bachelor Born. Other stage performances include Over 21, Born Yesterday, Small War on Murray Hill, Panama Hattie, Present Laughter, and Johnny Loves Mary. Her numerous screen appearances include Johnny Belinda, Caged, Rhubarb, and The High and the Mighty, for which she won an Academy Award nomination. Miss Sterling has been on almost every top live and filmed dramatic program, including Studio One, Playhouse 90, Lux Video Theatre, U.S. Steel, and a host of others.

RICHARD VENTURE started his acting career at the Drama Workshop of the New School in New York. He appeared in his first American production of MacLiammor's play, Where Stars Walk. Other stage appearances include Deirdre of the Sorrows, another Irish Classic, the Katharine Cornell production of That Lady, The Merchant of Venice with Luther Adler, and Dinosaur Wharf. He has played a wide variety of roles in summer stock and off-Broadway. Some of Mr. Venture's television credits include Playhouse 90, the Chevy Mystery Show and Court shows.

ROBERT DRASNIN is an alumnus of UCLA and has been the Associate Conductor of the UCLA Symphony for three years. He has composed and conducted scores for shows such as Playhouse 90, Climax and Ford Star Time, and also for an experimental film, One Way Ticket to Hell, which won a Look Magazine Screen Producer's Guild Award in 1955. He has recently played flute in the Lukas Foss Improvisation Chamber Ensemble and the Philadelphia Orchestra. He has also worked with Les Brown and the Red Norvo Quintet. He is presently employed at CBS in the Music Department.

#### PROMOTION CREDITS

Publicity.....Ann Summer

Special Publicity Assistance.....Paul Simqu

Promotion.....Glenn L. Anderson

#### THE THEATRE GROUP

Robert Ryan.....President

John Houseman.....Vice-President

Milton Sperling.....Treasurer

Frances Inglis.....Executive Coordinator



I Knock at the Door

New York City Production, Theatre de Lys, 1964

Production design.....Eldon Elder

Production Stage Manager.....Jacqueline Donnet

Press.....Lawrence Witchel Associates and David Lipsky

Producers.....Lucille Lortel Productions, Inc.

Cast of Performers

Jessie Royce Landis

Staats Cotsworth

Rae Allen

Stephen Elliot

Paul Shyre

Robert Walker

I Knock at the Door

White Barn Theatre, Westport, Connecticut, 1965

Staff of the White Barn Theatre

Manager.....Kenneth Richards

Publicity.....Leo Miller

Production Stage Manager.....Dennis Helfind

Program, Invitations.....George Emanuel

Lighting.....Koski-Long

Productions assistants.....Minerva Farrel  
Bruce Porter  
Tracey Forrest

Cast of Performers

Anne Meachem

Wayne Maxwell

Jessie Royce Landis

Dermot McNamara

Stephen Elliott

Paul Shyre

APPENDIX C  
PICTURES IN THE HALLWAY

# PLAYBILL

*the magazine for theatregoers*



## HURRAHS! AND FARETHEEWELLS

*The Theatre's Tribute to Sean O'Casey*

IMPERIAL THEATRE

OCTOBER 11th, 1964



Paul Shyre and Sean O'Casey at O'Casey home in Torquay,  
England.

**LIBRARY & MUSEUM OF  
THE PERFORMING ARTS**

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY AT LINCOLN CENTER  
111 AMSTERDAM AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10023

As a Memorial to Margaret Webster

THE THEATRE COLLECTION  
of  
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

cordially invites

Mr. Paul Shyre ~

to attend a dramatic reading of

Sean O'Casey's PICTURES IN THE HALLWAY  
Adapted by Paul Shyre

with

PAUL SHYRE  
ALINE MAC MAHON  
TOM HULCE

MARIAN SELDES  
STAATS COTSWORTH  
CHRISTOPHER HEWETT

on October 31, 1975 - 12:45 p.m.

The Auditorium  
The Library and Museum of the Performing Arts  
at Lincoln Center  
111 Amsterdam Avenue

There will be one performance only which  
will be simultaneously recorded on videotape  
for the Library's Theatre on Film and Tape  
Collection and will become part of the  
Theatre Collection archives.

R.S.V.P. - By enclosed card or 799-2200, Ext. 205  
(Our Auditorium is small. Please respond soon)



**LIMITED ENGAGEMENT • 6 WEEKS ONLY!**

Lucille Lortel  
presents

**JESSIE ROYCE LANDIS**  
STAATS COTSWORTH  
in  
**SEAN O'CASEY'S**  
**"I KNOCK**  
**AT THE DOOR"**

Adapted by **PAUL SHYRE**  
co-starring

**RAE ALLEN**      **STEPHEN ELLIOTT**      **PAUL SHYRE**

and

**ROBERT WALKER**

Directed by  
**Mr. Shyre**

Production Designed by  
**Eldon Elder**

**PREVIEWS BEGIN NOV. 20 • OPENS NOV. 24**

**PEGGY WOOD**  
STAATS COTSWORTH  
in  
**SEAN O'CASEY'S**  
**"PICTURES**  
**IN THE HALLWAY"**

Adapted by **PAUL SHYRE**  
co-starring

**RAE ALLEN**      **STEPHEN ELLIOTT**      **PAUL SHYRE**

and

**ROBERT WALKER**

Directed by  
**Mr. Shyre**

Production Designed by  
**Eldon Elder**

**PREVIEWS BEGIN DEC. 11 • OPENS DEC. 15**

**MAIL AND PHONE ORDERS FILLED**

Evs.: Fri. at 8:40, Sat. at 7:00 & 10:00: \$4.50, 4.00, 3.50, Tues., Wed., Thurs., Sun. Evgs. at 8:40 and Sun. Matinee at 3:00: \$4.00, 3.50, 3.00. New Year's Eve: \$5.50, 5.00, 4.50. Nov. 24 and Dec. 15 Evgs. Sold Out. Enclose self-addressed, stamped envelope, suggest several alternate dates.

**THEATRE DE LYS 121 Christopher Street • WA 4-8782**

Pictures in the Hallway

Kaufmann Concert Hall, New York City, Sunday May 27, 1956

Director, Stuart Vaughn

Adapter, Paul Shyre

Cast of Performers

Rae Allen

George Brenlin

Aline MacMahon

Paul Shyre

Robert Geiringer

Staats Cotsworth



Pictures in the Hallway

The Playhouse Theatre, New York City, 1956

Cast of Performers

Rae Allen

George Brenlin

Aline MacMahon

Paul Shyre

Robert Geiringer

Staats Cotsworth

Flutist, Dorothy Tutt

Manager.....Abel Enklewitz

Stage Manager.....Robert Paschall

\*\* Counsel.....Howard Gottfried

Press.....Richard Maney  
Martin Shwartz

Master Carpenter.....Chester A. Rakeman

Master Electrician.....Bernie Norton

Master Propertyman.....Max Landsman

\*\*Note that Howard Gottfried was co-producer on other Shyre projects along with Lucille Lortel.

Pictures in the Hallway

Ravinia Theater, Chicago, Illinois, 1957

Directed by Stuart Vaughn

Adapted by Paul Shyre

Cast of Performers

Aline MacMahon

Bette Henritze

John McLiam

Arthur Shields

Alvin Epstein

Robert Geiringer

Flutist.....Dorothy Tutt

Pictures in the Hallway

Phoenix Theatre, New York City, NY, 1959

Directed by Stuart Vaughn

Assistant to the Director, Jenny Egan

Cast of Performers

Gerry Jedd

Mildred Dunnock

Rex Everhart

Donald Madden

J. D. Cannon

Eric Berry

Flutist, John Perras

Pictures in the Hallway

Theatre de Lys, New York City, 1964

Directed by Paul Shyre

Production design.....Eldon Elder

Stage manager.....Jacqueline Donnet

Cast of Performers

Peggy Wood

Staats Cotsworth

Rae Allen

Stephen Elliott

Paul Shyre

Robert Walker

Pictures in the Hallway

Greenwich Mews Theatre, New York City, 1965

Directed by Paul Shyre

Production design.....Eldon Elder

Costumes.....Clifford Capone

Cast of Performers

Rae Allen

Wayne Maxwell

Nancy Pollack

Stephen Elliott

Dermot McNamara

Paul Shyre

Alternate for Mr. Shyre.....Tom Keena

Pictures in the Hallway Tour, 1966

Directed by Paul Shyre

Associate Producer.....Alan Frank

Production Manager.....Mildred Jocelyn

Stage Manager.....John Benson

Cast of Performers

Helena Carroll

John Leighton

Wayne Maxwell

Alan Mixon

Eugenia Rawls

Paul Shyre

Pictures in the Hallway

Forum Theater, Lincoln Center, New York City, 1971

Director, Paul Shyre

Costumes and Setting, Douglas W. Schmidt

Lighting, John Gleason

Cast of Performers

Aline MacMahon

Stephen McHattie

Helena Carroll

Michael McGuire

Dermot McNamara

Paul Shyre

Pictures in the Hallway

The Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library

Production, 1975

Directed by Stuart Vaughn

Lighting by Eldon Elder

Stage Manager, Errol Selsby

Cast of Performers

Aline MacMahon

Thomas Hulce

Marian Seldes

Michael Higgins

Christopher Hewett

Paul Shyre

Director, Theatre on Film and Tape Collection, Betty Corwin

Technical Assistant..... Richard Ryan

Chief Engineer

Rogers and Hammerstein Archives of

Recorded Sound..... Sam Sanders



APPENDIX D

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

## I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

Adapted by Paul Shyre  
in part from a film script by Joe Wershba

A dramatic reading for voices and small orchestra

March 1, 1957

Waldorf Astoria Hotel

Cast

Basil Rathbone  
Betty Field  
Conrad Nagel  
Staats Cotsworth

A BARE STAGE WITH DRAPES HUNG IN CYCLORAMA FASHION. TO THE RIGHT D.S. ARE FOUR LECTERNS WITH FOUR HIGH STOOLS BEHIND THEM. TO THE LEFT OF THESE ARE TWO CHAIRS AND A TABLE BETWEEN THEM. A SMALL ORCHESTRA IS IN THE WINGS. THERE ARE SINGLE SPOTLIGHTS ON EACH OF THE LECTERNS, AND ANOTHER ON THE CHAIRS AND TABLE, ALL CAPABLE OF BEING CONTROLLED SEPARATELY.

WHEN THE PLAY BEGINS, THE FRONT CURTAIN IS CLOSED. THE FOUR ACTORS BEHIND THE LECTERNS WILL BE CALLED: A, B, C, AND D.

(Lectern C will be an actress, the other three all actors.)

THE HOUSELIGHTS DIM AND THEN ACTOR "A" STEPS OUT IN FRONT OF THE CURTAIN, ADDRESSING THE AUDIENCE.

(Quoting from Benet's "Listen to the People")

"Out of the flesh, out of the minds and hearts

Of thousand upon thousand common men,

Cranks, martyrs, starry-eyed enthusiasts,

Slow-spoken neighbors, hard to push around,

Women whose hands were gentle with their kids

And men with a cold passion for mere justice.

We made this thing, this dream,

This land unsatisfied by little ways,

Open to every man who brought good will,

This peaceless vision, groping for the stars,

Not as a huge devouring machine  
 Rolling and clanking with remorseless force  
 Over submitted bodies and the dead  
 But as live earth where anything could grow,  
 Your crankiness, my notions and his dream,  
 Grow and be looked at, grow and live or die,  
 But get their chance of growing and the sun.  
 We made it and we make it and it's ours.  
 We shall maintain it. It shall be sustained."

America emerged out of obscurity into history only some  
 four centuries ago. It is the newest of great nations,  
 yet it is the most interesting. It is interesting be-  
 cause, notwithstanding its youth, it is today the oldest  
 republic and the oldest democracy and lives under the  
 oldest written constitution in the world. It is inter-  
 esting because, from its earliest beginnings, its people  
 have been conscious of a peculiar destiny, because upon  
 it have been fastened the hopes of the human race, and  
 because it has not failed to fulfill that destiny or to  
 justify those hopes.

(THE BAND STARTS TO PLAY "HOT TIME IN THE OLD TOWN TO-  
 NIGHT" . THE CURTAIN OPENS AND THE FOUR ACTORS ARE STAND-  
 ING ABREAST IN FRONT OF THEIR LECTERNS FOR THE FIRST SET  
 OF HEADLINES)

#### HEADLINES # 1

CAPITAL CHEERS GREAT TWENTIETH CENTURY  
 CHURCHES GREET NEW CENTURY  
 PROHIBITION PARTY MEETS IN CHICAGO  
 SOCIALIST PARTY MEETS IN NEW YORK

SAYS THEODORE ROOSEVELT:

"Speak softly and carry a big stick, you'll go far. Under no circumstances could I or would I accept the nomination for the Vice-Presidency."

GALVESTON SWEEP BY GREAT TIDAL WAVE AND STORM

ROBERT LAFOLLETTE ELECTED GOVERNOR OF WISCONSIN

CARRIE NATION MAKES HATCHET RAID IN KANSAS SALOONS

IN DISCUSSING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, SENATOR ALBERT J.

BEVERIDGE SAID IN PART: "The twentieth century will be American. American thought will dominate it. American progress will give it color and direction. American deeds will make it illustrious. The regeneration of the world, physical as well as moral, has begun, and revolutions never move backwards."

(MUSIC ENDS: ACTORS RETURN TO LECTERNS. LIGHTS COME ON AND OFF THEM AS THEY SPEAK.)

A-

What you are about to hear is a brief report on freedom's progress in our lifetime...of gains...of setbacks too...

but above all, the hope that burns for all of us in the soul and spirit of a free America.

B-

Give me a complete definition of your American freedom.

A-

We have no complete definition. It grows. It changes. It keeps on adding. But this we do know. The soul and spirit of America have long rootholds, and we have living documents which we call our beginnings.

C-

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights..."

B-

Well, they could hardly mean that all men are created

equal in strength. Maybe they meant equal in brain power?

A-

A genius like Einstein comes along once in a civilization.

C-

Could they have meant that all women are created equal in beauty?

D-

Foolish question.

A-

No, it's very simple really. The American Heritage is the right to be free in person, in thought, in speech, in belief. The American Heritage is that all men are created equal in the right to make the most of themselves.

D-

We sure get hustled into the twentieth century like a housewife getting set to clean out grandpa's spare room ...autos, bikes, new railroads, women's bustles.

A-

Bell and his telephone.

C-

The Wright Brothers and their airplane.

D-

Edison and his light bulb, the motion picture industry.

A-

We were a nation of some seventy-five millions at the turn of the century...and some thought that was about all we had room for.

D-

They were wrong.

C-

For a few there was great wealth...fantastic wealth.

A-

The captains of industry, the empire builders.

B-

The railroad magnates, the tycoons.

D-

Moguls, financiers.

A-

When people complained that great wealth was depriving many of opportunity, one rich man said:

B-

This country is good enough for me.

A-

To which someone else replied:

D-

Whenever he gets tired of it, he can give it back to the rest of us.

A-

Except for the American Indian, we are all immigrants, or descendants of immigrants. At the turn of the century, one out of eight Americans was foreign born. Millions more would come in the next two decades. And those who came in the 1900's came much for the same reasons as those who came a hundred years before.

APPENDIX E

U.S.A.

Tonight, turn back the clock. To "Moonlight Bay" and "Remember the Maine" to "The Black Bottom" and Eugene V. Debs, "Over There" and Rudolph Valentino, Isadora Duncan and "The Bull Market"—to an exuberant trip through John DosPassos'



Adapted by John DosPassos and Paul Shyre.  
 Starring: Peter Bonerz, John Davidson, James Farentino, Joan Hackett,  
 Shirley Knight, Michele Lee, Edward G. Robinson—speaking for DosPassos.  
 Directed by George Schaefer. Produced by Lewis Freedman.

Hollywood Television Theatre

KCET Ch. 28 at 9:00 PM

Public Broadcasting Service

This advertisement contributed by Public Broadcasting Service.



U.S.A.

## Player A

Moorehouse.....Laurence Hugo  
Orville Wright

## Player B

McGill  
Debs  
Joe Williams.....William Windom  
Edgecombe  
Bingham  
etc.

## Player C

Dick Savage.....William Redfield  
Ollie Taylor  
etc.

## Player D

Janey Williams.....Peggy McCay  
Pat Doolittle  
etc.

## Player E

Gertrude.....Joan Tetzel  
Janey's Mother

## Player F

Eleanor Stoddard.....Sada Thompson  
Isadora  
etc.

Directed by: Paul Shyre

Setting and costumes: Robert Ramsey

Lighting: Lee Watson

Orchestrations: Robert Cobert

Musical direction and continuity: Herbert Harris

Associate producer: Richard Rosen

Premiere performance, Martinique Theatre, New York City,  
October 28, 1959

U. S. A.

Tour 1964

## CAST

John Leighton	B
Wayne Maxwell	C
Will Mackenzie	A
Jayne Heller	E
Scottie MacGregor	F
Barbara Hayes	D

## U.S.A. Cast of Characters

## Player A

Moorehouse.....Will Mackenzie  
Orville Wright

## Player B

McGill  
Debs  
Joe Williams  
Edgecombe  
Bingham.....John Leighton  
Dr. Gleason  
Reggie

## Player C

Dick Savage  
Ollie Taylor.....Wayne Maxwell  
Alec  
Morton  
Adagio Dancer

## Player D

Janey Williams  
Miss O'Higgins.....Barbara Hayes  
Pat Doolittle  
Emma Goldman

## Player E

Gertrude.....Jayne Heller  
Janey's Mother

## Player F

Eleanor Stoddard  
Isadora.....Scottie MacGregor  
Miss Simpson  
Mrs. Robinson

The action of the play takes place between the turn of the Century and 1930.

Production Supervisor.....Peter Xantho

Stage Manager.....Jacqueline Donnet

Assistant Producer.....Gustav Sabin

Production Assistant.....Nancy Cammarota

## Good Shepherd-Faith Church

October 1, 1972

The City Center Acting Company presents in repertory:

U. S. A.

Adapted by Paul Shyre from the John Dos Passos  
novel of the same title; Director, Anne McNaughton;  
Costumes, John David Ridge; Lighting, Joe Pacitti

## CAST

Player A.....Norman Snow  
Player B.....Benjamin Hendrickson  
Player C.....James Moody  
Player D.....Mary Joan Negro  
Player E.....Leah Chandler  
Player F.....Mary Lou Rosato  
Player G/Piano Player.....Gerald Shaw

The Little Church Around the Corner

October 27-November 13, 1976

U. S. A.

by Paul Shyre and John Dos Passos

Director, John Henry Davis

Musical Director, Norma Curley

Choreographer, Merry Lynn Katis

Set, Raymond C. Recht

Costumes, A. Christina Giannini

Lighting, Francis Roefaro

Technical Director, Gerald Weinstein

CAST

John Getz (Moorehouse)

Reathel Bean (Debs/Joe Williams/Edgecombe/Bingham)

Allan Carlsen (Dick Savage/Ollie Taylor)

Nita Novy (Janey Williams)

Linda Barnhurst (Gertrude)

Anne C. Twomey (Eleanor Stoddard/Isadora)

APPENDIX F

DRUMS UNDER THE WINDOWS

The Torquay Company presents

Drums Under the Windows

Adapted by Paul Shyre

CAST

(in the order in which they speak)

Narrator.....Martyn Green  
 Christy Mahon, Dr. Henchy etc. ....Dana Elcar  
 Sean Casside.....George Brenlin  
 Adam, Cockney Officer, etc. ....William Windom  
 Viceroy, McConkey etc. ....James Kenny  
 Mrs. Casside, Newswoman etc. ....Dorothy Patten  
 Mild Millie, Mrs. Ballynoy, Eve, etc. ....Pauline Flanagan

Directed by Paul Shyre

Designed by Eldon Elder

Original music by Robert Rines

Music arranged and conducted by Herbert Harris

World Premiere on October 13, 1960

APPENDIX G  
YEATS AND COMPANY



THE THEATRE GROUP

Professional Theatre University of California Extension, Los Angeles presents in Celebration of the Yeats Centenary (1865-1965)



THE PROSE, POETRY, AND PLAYS OF WILLIAM BUTLER

# YEATS

INCLUDING **THE POT OF BROTH • PURGATORY** | ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY PAUL SHYRE  
**THE WORDS UPON THE WINDOW-PANE** | COSTUMES BY DOROTHY JEAKINS  
 HUMANITIES BUILDING AUDITORIUM, UCLA • OCTOBER 20 THRU DECEMBER 4, 1965

THERE WILL BE NO PERFORMANCES ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, NOVEMBER 1, AND NOVEMBER 8; TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16; THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25 (THANKSGIVING); AND WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1. GOOD SEATS ARE AVAILABLE FOR SPECIAL ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCES ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 22 AND 29.  
 TICKETS: \$4.25-\$3.25 Friday, Saturday, Sunday, \$3.75-\$2.75 Monday-Thursday. STUDENTS: \$2.00 and \$1.50 • Sunday Evening Performances at 7:30 p.m. All Other Evening Performances at 8:30 p.m. • Tickets on sale at Concert Ticket Office, University of California Extension, 10851 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024, and all Mutual Agencies.

FOR INFORMATION CALL 478-7575

YEATS AND COMPANY

Adapted by

PAUL SHYRE

THE THEATRE GROUP  
University of California Extension  
Los Angeles, California  
10/1965

## ACT I

The stage is bare, but for various props and costumes and bits of scenery scattered about. Up stage center is a large blackboard upon which is scrawled in large chalk writing:

"W. B. YEATS  
1865 - 1965  
IRELAND"

Seven actors make their way upon the stage. One of them dressed as Yeats goes to the side of the stage and remains there separate from the others. Special light upon him. The other six are dressed in various costumes, and as they enter some introductory music is played. As they speak, the light on Yeats slowly comes on brighter. NARRATOR I moves forward and addresses the audience.

NARRATOR I

(pompously)

The works of William Butler Yeats have not, generally speaking, been much regarded by modern critics. They have tended to judge the earlier ones as classic and sentimental, and the later ones as barbarous, remote, theatrically impractical, or merely cosmic.

YEATS

(interrupting)

I believe myself to be a dramatist. I desire to show events and not merely tell of them. And two of my best friends were won for me by my plays. And I seem to myself most alive at the moment when a room full of people share in one lofty emotion.

## NARRATOR II

(stepping forward)

William Butler Yeats was all his life a poet. No one in the field of modern letters so consistently wore the poet's mantle or knew how to make experience serve his art.

## YEATS

What is there to tell you about myself? My first memories are fragmentary and isolated. I remember as a child sitting upon somebody's knee, looking out of an Irish window at a wall covered with cracks and falling plaster. But what wall I do not remember. And being told that some relation once lived there. I look out of the window in London. It is Fitzroy Road. Some boys are playing in the road, and among them a boy in uniform -- a telegraph boy perhaps. When I ask who the boy is, a servant tells me that he is going to blow the town up, and I go to sleep in terror.

## NARRATOR III

Yeats was a difficult man to know -- not because he was aloof, but because he had so many sides and lived on such a high plane of intelligence. He was reserved about his personal life, though he spoke freely of his ideas, and those who had spent hours with him would realize afterwards that while they had been encouraged to speak of their concerns, Yeats had said nothing about his. So Yeats tells a great deal about his mind, but he is quite incomplete on the emotional side.

## YEATS

Yes, being in love, and in no way lucky in that love, the great event of a boy's life is the awakening of sex. He will bathe many times a day, or get up at dawn and, having stripped, leap to and fro over a stick made upon two chairs, and hardly know and never admit that he had begun to take pleasure in his own nakedness. Nor will he understand at all the greater change in his mind. [As I look backward, I seem to discover that my passions, my loves, and my despairs instead of being my enemies, a disturbance of an attack became so beautiful that I had to be constantly alone to give them my whole attention.] I notice that now, for the first time, what I saw when alone is more vivid in my memory than what I did or saw in company.

## NARRATOR IV

(as Maud Gonne)

Yeats's own lines tell Yeats's story better than any writer, and his story is part of Ireland's story. During long walks in the Dublin mountains, Willie told me of his plans for a great literary movement for the glory of Ireland and recited many poems he had written. We were both held by the mysterious power of Ireland. [To me, Ireland was the all-protecting Mother, who had to be released from the bondage of the foreigner -- to be free and able to protect her people. To Willie, less aware of the people than of the land, Ireland was the beauty of unattainable perfection, and he had to strive to express that beauty, that all could worship. Much of his

## NARRATOR IV (cont.)

childhood had been spent in the weird, tragic loveliness of Sligo's mountains and the mystery of its lakes. From this western magic he never escaped.] He brought great gifts and layed them at the quiet feet of Ireland -- gifts of glory which brought fame to her and to himself, for Ireland is a great giver of reward. Those through whom the spirit has once spoken are immortal and shall be remembered forever, and of these is Willie Yeats.

## YEATS

I want to create for myself an unpopular theatre and an audience like a secret society where admission is by favor and never too many. [I desire a mysterious art, always reminding and half-reminding those who understand it of dearly-loved things, doing its work by suggestion, not by direct statement. I seek not a theatre, but the theatre's anti-self -- an art that can appease all within us and becomes uneasy as the curtain falls and the house breaks into applause.]

## NARRATOR VI

Well, the fact remains that hardly any of his plays are ever done in the English-speaking world. I mean what theatre today would consider producing any of his plays?

## YEATS

I need a theatre. I believe myself to be a dramatist. [I desire to show events and not merely tell of them. And two of my best friends were won for me by my plays, and I seem to myself most alive when a room full of people share in one lofty emotion.]

## NARRATOR VI

Yes, yes. You've told us all that already.

## NARRATOR II

One could hardly have called Yeats a romantic in the true sense of the word. It was one simple marriage that lasted a lifetime, and nothing in the way of a series of robust love affairs. In all appearances, he was both shy and retiring.

## YEATS

Not entirely. [When I was a young man I had various women friends whom I would call on towards 5 o'clock, mainly to discuss my thoughts that I could not bring to a man without meeting some competing thought, but partly because their tea and toast saved my pennies for the bus ride home.] With women I was timid and abashed. I remember I was sitting on a seat under the British Museum feeding pigeons when a couple of girls sat near and began enticing my pigeons away, laughing and whispering to one another. And I looked straight at one of them, very indignant, and presently went into the museum without turning my head towards them. Since then I have often wondered if they were pretty, or merely very young. Sometimes I told myself very adventurous love stories, with myself for hero, and at other times I'd planned out a life of lonely austerity. And after all, what is romance if not a preparation for something that never happens. The best thing in life is the game of life, and someday all the poets will find this out.

Yeats & Company

The Prose, Poetry & Plays of W. B. Yeats

Adapted and Directed by Paul Shyre

Costumes by Dorothy Jeakins

Lighting by Arvid Nelson

Music Composed and Selected by Salli Terri

October 23 thru December 4, 1965

THE CAST  
(in alphabetical order)

John Crowther  
Patricia Cutts  
Brendan Dillon  
Will Kuluva  
Diana Maddox  
Murray Matheson  
Helene Winston

THE PROSE AND POETRY

William Butler Yeats.....Murray Matheson  
and  
The Company (from left to right).....John Crowther  
Brendan Dillon  
Patricia Cutts  
Diana Maddox  
Will Kuluva  
Helene Winston

THE PLAYS

Purgatory (1938)

A Boy.....John Crowther  
An Old Man.....Will Kuluva  
Scene: On a road before a ruined house

## THE WORDS UPON THE WINDOW-PANE (1934)

Dr. Trench.....Brendan Dillon  
Miss Mackenna.....Diana Maddox  
John Corbet.....John Crowther  
Abraham Johnson.....Murray Matheson  
Mrs. Mallet.....Patricia Cutts  
Cornelius Patterson.....Will Kuluva  
Mrs. Henderson.....Helene Winston

Scene: A room in a lodging house, Dublin

There will be one intermission

Executive Coordinator, Gordon Davidson

Production Stage Manager, Myles Harmon

Stage Manager, Joel Miller

House Manager, William E. Beifuss

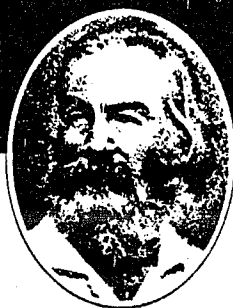


APPENDIX H

A WHITMAN PORTRAIT

**"skillfully and  
successfully etched"**

THE NEW YORK TIMES



**ALEXANDER SCOURBY**

IN

*A Whitman  
Portrait*

BY

**PAUL SHYRE**

Mail & phone orders now. Tues., Wed. and Thurs. at 8:40. Sun. 1:00 & 8:00. \$2.90-3.90. Fri. at 8:40.  
Sat. at 7:00 & 10:00-\$3.75-4.75. Enclose self-addressed stamped envelope. Make checks payable to

**Gramercy Arts Theatre**

# A WHITMAN PORTRAIT



A Whitman Portrait

had its world premiere in April, 1965, at Nassau Community College, Garden City, Long Island, also directed by Mr. Shyre, and with the following cast:

Whitman.....	James Whitmore
The Woman.....	Barbara Barrie
The Young Man.....	Wayne Maxwell
The Man.....	John Leighton
The Boy.....	Sam Carville

### A Whitman Portrait

was first presented by Ira Skutch and Allan Frank at the Gramercy Arts Theatre, in New York City, on October 11, 1966. It was directed by Paul Shyre; setting and lighting were by Eldon Elder; the costumes were by Sara Brook; and the original music was by Robert Rines. The cast was as follows:

The Man.....Alan Mixon  
 The Young Man.....Wayne Maxwell  
 The Woman.....Carolyn Coates  
 Walt Whitman.....Alexander Scourby

ALEXANDER SCOURBY who began in Theatre as an apprentice with Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre, is a veteran of Broadway productions of the musical Tovarich, Darkness at Noon, Detective Story and Tonight in Samarkand. In addition he played Peter Cauchon to the St. Joans of Uta Hagen and Siobhan McKenna and was the Player King, Rosenkrantz and the King to the Hamlets of Leslie Howard, Maurice Evans and Donald Madden. He acted in the Phoenix Theatre production of A Month in the Country as well as their stagings of St. Joan and Hamlet. Mr. Scourby's films include Affair in Trinidad, The Big Heat, Giant, Man on a String and The Devil at Four O'Clock. He has played leading roles on all of television's major dramatic programs and has narrated such productions as The World of Jacqueline Kennedy, and The World of Sophia Loren and a number of NBC's Project 20 documentaries. His voice will be heard this season narrating several television documentaries for National Geographic. Mr. Scourby has recorded more than 300 books for Talking Books For the Blind during the last twenty-nine years.

CAROLYN COATES triumphed at Hecuba in the Circle-in-the-Square production of The Trojan Women, a role which earned her a 1965 Theatre World Award and a Golden Straw Award, after the company performed in Chicago. A native of Oklahoma, Miss Coates came East after graduating from U.C.L.A. and made several appearances in stock before joining the American Mime Theatre. A role in the Off-Broadway revival of The Innocents and a season at the Canal Fulton Summer Theatre preceded her assignment to stand-by for Geraldine Page in Sweet Bird of Youth. While standing by she also served and completed

a role in Robert Rossen's film The Hustler. Miss Coates has since portrayed Madam Irma in the Circle-in-the-Square production of The Balcony, appeared in summer theatre productions of The Cherry Orchard, The Night of the Iguana and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? and was a member of the Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre Company last season.

WAYNE MAXWELL bowed locally in the New York Shakespeare Festival's Titus Andronicus before touring in Gertrude Berg's company of The Matchmaker as Barnaby, a role since repeated in support of Miriam Hopkins, Ilka Chase and Signe Hasso. Off-Broadway in the two-character Kataki and in The Long Voyage Home and Pictures In the Hallway, he toured summer theatres in Father of the Bride, The Golden Fleecing and Say Darling. He made his first public appearance at age nine with Ace Newton and His Boy Ropers in his native Tulsa. As a member of the first Ford Foundation acting company, at Nine Vance's Alley Theatre in Houston, he acted in the premiere of Frank Gagliano's Night of the Dunces. He was seen in the first performance of Gore Vidal's The March to the Sea at the Hyde Park Playhouse. His portrayal of a beatnik on Naked City remains his favorite TV assignment.

ALAN MIXON assumed the role of Atahualpa The Royal Hunt of the Sun on Broadway last season then played the role at Hollywood's Greek Theatre. After traveling with his grandfather's circus, he won "legit" experience at Miami's Studio "M" Theatre, playing leads in productions including The Corn Is Green, Picnic, The Immoralist and The Glass Menagerie. After two years with the 82nd Airborne Division, he created the role of Chance in the world premiere of Sweet Bird of Youth at Studio "M." Seen Off-Broadway in Garden District, Desire Under the Elms, The Trojan Women, The Alchemist and The Childbuyer, on Broadway in The Devils and The Sign In Sidney Brustein's Window, and in the Chicago and San Francisco companies of A View From the Bridge, he toured summer theatres as Biff in Death of a Salesman and as Mangiacavallo in The Rose Tattoo and, last spring, toured colleges in Pictures In the Hallway.

PAUL SHYRE, writer, producer, director and actor, occupies a unique position in theatre. Sean O'Casey's major advocate on this side of the Atlantic, he adapted the Irish author's Pictures In the Hallway and I Knock at the Door for Broadway. For Off-Broadway he adapted O'Casey's Drums Under the Windows, co-produced his plays Purple Dust and Cock-A-Doodle Dandy and acted in all three offerings. Mr. Shyre co-authored and directed a dramatic version of John Dos Passos' U.S.A., adapted and directed Strindberg's Creditors and directed and co-produced O'Neill's Diff'rent and The Long Voyage Home--all for

Off-Broadway. His play The Child Buyer, based on John Hersey's novel, was produced in California by The Theatre Group and produced Off-Broadway under Theatre Guild auspices. Earlier this year The Theatre Group presented Yeats and Company, his adaptation of W. B. Yeats' work, at U.C.L.A. His adaptation Pictures In the Hallway completed a successful tour of colleges last spring. Mr. Shyre has received the Vernon Rice Drama Desk Award, the Brandeis University Theatre Arts Award, an "Obie" Award and a nomination for an Antoinette Perry Award for I Knock at the Door. This year Boston University has honored him by establishing a Paul Shyre collection on campus.

ELDON ELDER, Designer, has seventeen Broadway and six off-Broadway shows to his credit and won additional acclaim this summer for his costumes and sets for Oresteia and The Birds at the Ypsilanti Greek Theatre. He has designed settings, costumes and lighting for the American Shakespeare Festival, New York City Center, New York Shakespeare Festival, St. Louis Municipal Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Hunter Opera Association and the Julliard School of Music and for CBS-TV.

ROBERT RINES who wrote the background music and ballads is a Bostonian who collaborated with Paul Shyre and the Torquay Company to write the incidental music and songs for Drums Under the Windows, Diff'rent, The Long Voyage Home and Creditors. Mr. Rines also composed the music for the Westport production of Emlyn Williams The Wind of Heaven.

IRA SKUTCH who makes his "legitimate" producing bow with A Whitman Portrait has been active as a producer and director of television shows for nearly twenty years. He is currently with Goodson-Todman for whom he first produced Two For the Money and then directed Beat the Clock before switching back to producing and Play Your Hunch. Mr. Skutch who began in the communications industry as an N.B.C. page is currently directing The Match Game.

ALLAN FRANK has appeared extensively in all areas of "show business." On Broadway in Daughter of Silence, A Shadow of My Enemy, Skipper Next to God, in the films The Eddy Duchin Story, On the Waterfront, Tight Spot and on most of television's dramatic and comedy shows, he is a writer as well as actor and producer, and has had several scripts produced on television. Last spring he was associate producer of the college tour of Paul Shyre's adaptation Pictures In the Hallway. His next video appearance will be on Flipper.

APPENDIX I  
WILL ROGERS' U.S.A.



**THE GREENVILLE LITTLE THEATRE**  
444 College St.

TAKES PLEASURE IN PRESENTING

**JAMES WHITMORE**



IN  
**THE WORLD PREMIER**  
**"WILL ROGERS' U.S.A."**

January, 1970 - 14, 15, 16, 17, - 20, 21, 22, 23, 24  
8:30 P.M.

Matinees

Saturday, January 17 and 24 - 2:45 P.M.

Sunday, January 18 and 25 - 3:00 P.M.

The Greenville Little Theatre is a non-commercial, non-profit-making organization,  
which believes that the spoken drama has a place in the life of the community.

# PLAYBILL

HELEN HAYES THEATRE



**"WILL ROGERS' U.S.A."**

NOW BOOKING — January through April 1973

THIRD SEASON

One of the Most Exciting Attractions in Years

## "WILL ROGERS' U.S.A."

Adapted by PAUL SHYRE

STARRING

# PAUL TRIPP

From the Ziegfeld froths to Hollywood; the pungent observations and velvet-tipped harpoons of Will Rogers had Americans laughing. Today Paul Tripp continues the tradition with his brilliant interpretation of Mr. Rogers' comments like it was then and like it is today. To Wit:

**Education** (his own): "I could have gone to West Point, but I was too proud to talk to a Congressman."

**The Democratic Party**: "I do not belong to any organized political party — I'm a Democrat."

**The Republican Party**: "If the good Lord can find his way clear to blessing the Republican Party the way it's been carrying on lately, I don't think the rest of us is going to have to ask for it."

**Honesty in Politics**: "There is no way in this world that you can make a political party halfway decent unless you keep it out of office."

**Traffic Congestion**: "Why do they call it 'the traffic problem'? When things cease to move, it's not traffic."

**John Coward**: "He kept his mouth shut. That was such a novelty among politicians that it just swept the country."

**Warren G. Harding**: "Ohio, where Harding came from, they said they was due a President since they'd not had one since Taft. Well, look at the United States, we ain't had one since Lincoln."

**U.S. Diplomacy**: "History shows that the United States never lost a war or won a conference."

**U.S. Foreign Policy**: "We'll send Marines to any nation that can get 10 people to say they want us."

**U.S.**: "I'm a man of peace myself. I see no use for war of any shape, form or description. I don't believe there's any more humor in a war than there is reason for it."

**Congress**: "My little jokes don't hurt nobody, but when Congress makes a joke, it's a law. When they make a law it's a joke."

**Politicians**: "A politician is a local bandit sent to Washington to raid headquarters. The farther I get away from Washington the more hope I have for the country."

**Public Office**: "Once a man holds public office, he's absolutely no good for honest work."

**History**: "In history, it's not what you did that counts, but what you got away with."

**Hospitals**: "... the only place you don't have to pay in advance or have luggage. They don't keep the trunk like a hotel does; they keep the body."

**Congress**: "Congress has a slogan, why sleep at home when you can sleep in Congress."



**Congressional Priorities**: "You can get a road to almost anywhere out of your government. Won't be long now before there won't be a poor farm in America won't have a concrete road running right to it."

**Happiness**: "... just live your life and have a good time. Don't fret too much. Try to get a few laughs and just live your life so you wouldn't be ashamed to tell the family parrot to the town gossip."

**The Future of the United States**: "I don't believe there is any element or any party or any Senator or any Congressman or anything in this country that can really hurt it, 'cause it's too big. Stepping this country now, with all our troubles, is like spitting on a railroad track to stop a freight train."

## PAUL TRIPP

Any artist who is presented an "Emmy," an "Oscar," a "Peabody," a "Look" and an "Ohio State University Award," and with the "Variety Showmanship Award" and the Television Academy's special "Governor's Citation" throws in, and still remains a genial and decent human being must be some kind of extraordinary man, and Paul Tripp is.

His series *Mr. I. Magination* is part of the folklore of television's golden age. His

*Tabby the Tube* raised an entire generation of children. His portrayal on stage of Benjamin Franklin in 1776 drew accolades from critics in all sections of the country. His *The Christmas That Almost Wasn't* was nominated for a "Grammy Award."

These are only some of the reasons the producer is proud to present Mr. Paul Tripp in *Will Rogers' U.S.A.* this season. He brings joy to a joyous show.

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**Tour limited to 12 weeks!**

A GEORGE SPOTA PRODUCTION



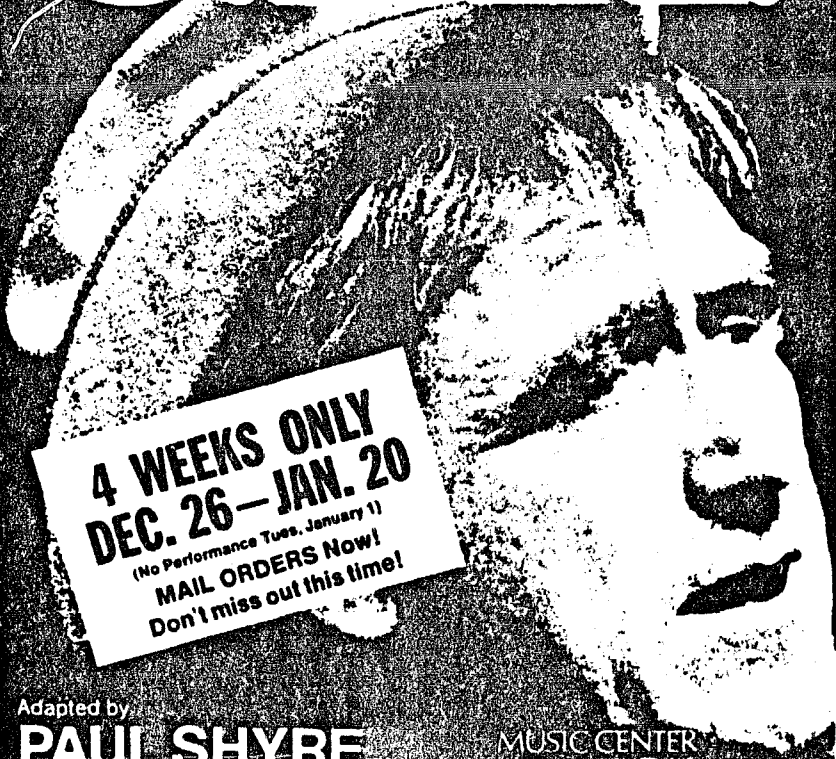
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GEORGE SPOTA in association with WILLIAM NUERGE, JR. presents

**JAMES WHITMORE**  
IN HIS GREATEST ROLE

**"WILL ROGERS"**  
**U.S.A.**



**4 WEEKS ONLY**  
**DEC. 26 — JAN. 20**  
(No Performance Tues. January 1)  
**MAIL ORDERS NOW!**  
Don't miss out this time!

Adapted by  
**PAUL SHYRE**  
A GEORGE SPOTA PRODUCTION  
A MUSIC CENTER PRESENTATIONS ATTRACTION

MUSIC CENTER  
**MARK TAPER**  
"LEGEND"

Will Rogers' U.S.A.

Adapted and Directed by Paul Shyre; Production Design, Eldon Elder; Associate Producer, Bryan Sterling; Presented by George Spota, in association with Marc Merson; Original Cast Album, Columbia Records; Opened in the Loretto Hilton Center, St. Louis, on Monday, September 13, 1971, and closed Feb. 27, 1972 in John Hancock Hall, Boston, Mass.

CAST

JAMES WHITMORE

in a one-man performance adapted from the words of Will Rogers.

General Manager: Seth Schapiro

Company Manager: Johanna Pool

NY Promotion Manager: Bernard Simon

Stage Manager: James Whitmore III

Will Rogers' U.S.A.

Adapted and Directed by Paul Shyre; Designed by Eldon Elder; Associate Producer, Bryan Sterling; Presented by George Spota and Marc Merson; Opened Wednesday, Sept. 16, 1970 in Ford's Theatre, Washington, D.C., and closed Jan. 2, 1971 in Los Angeles Music Center.

CAST

JAMES WHITMORE

A One-man show presented in two acts

General Manager: Seth Schapiro

NY Promotion Manager: Bernard Simon

Stage Manager: James Whitmore III

Will Rogers' U.S.A.

Adapted and Directed by Paul Shyre; Designed by Eldon Elder; Associate Producer, Bryan Sterling; Orininal Cast Album by Columbia Records; Booking Direction, Kolmar-Luth Entertainment; A George Spota Production; Opened Friday, Jan. 26, 1973 in Fullerton, Calif., and closed Feb. 9, 1973 in Sheepshead Bay, Brookly, NY.

CAST

PAUL TRIPP

A one-man show in two parts, using the words of Will Rogers

General Manager: Seth Schapiro

NY Promotion Manager: Bernard Simon

APPENDIX J

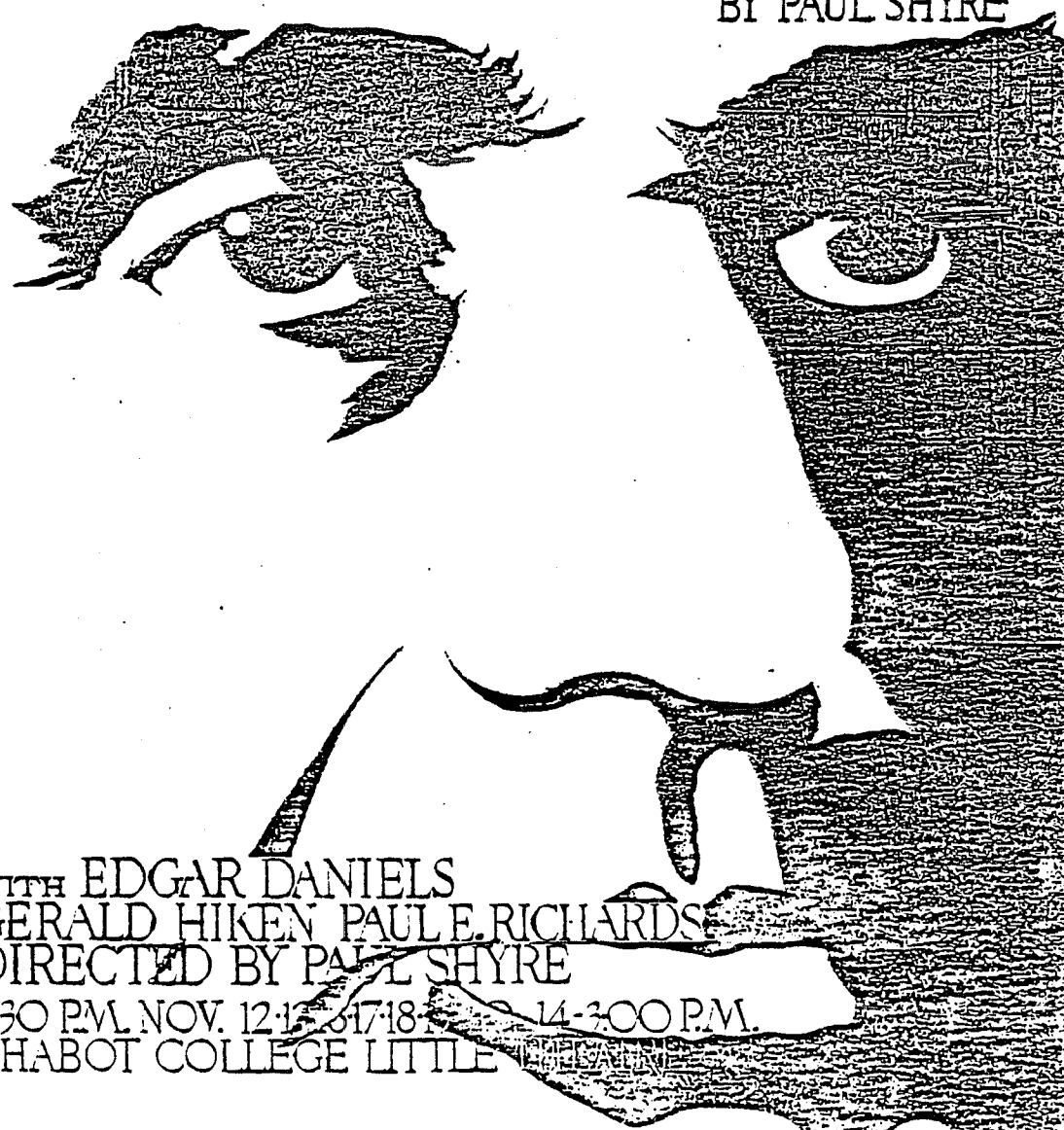
THE PRESIDENT IS DEAD



CHABOT COLLEGE HUMANITIES DIVISION  
& THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES PRESENT  
AN ORIGINAL HISTORICAL DRAMA

# THE PRESIDENT IS DEAD

BY PAUL SHYRE



WITH EDGAR DANIELS  
GERALD HIKEN PAUL E. RICHARDS  
DIRECTED BY PAUL SHYRE  
8:30 P.M. NOV. 12-13-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30  
CHABOT COLLEGE LITTLE THEATRE

Chabot College Humanities Division and  
The Office of Community Services

Present

The premiere production of THE PRESIDENT IS DEAD  
by Paul Shyre

Direction by Paul Shyre  
Settings and Technical Direction by Merrill Curtis  
Lighting by Robert Dietle  
Costumes by Norman Kirschbaum

The action occurs in Washington, D. C. in  
late spring and early summer, 1865

Act I

Scene 1 Reverdy Johnson's Office  
Scene 2 The Courtroom  
Scene 3 Reverdy Johnson's Office  
Scene 4 The Courtroom  
Scene 5 The White House

Act II

Scene 1 The Courtroom  
Scene 2 The Vatican  
Scene 3 The Courtroom

Epilogue The White House, 1881

There will be one ten minute intermission

Cast (in order of appearance)

Senator Reverdy Johnson.....	Edgar Daniels*
Doster.....	John McNeil
Anna Surratt.....	Leslie Acuff
Farmer.....	Tom Ramirez
General Ewing.....	Jim Shank
Courtroom Guards.....	Jim Cardwell
	Charles Lynch
	Gene Cubitto
	Ken Meyer
David Herold.....	Rob Neft
George Atzerodt.....	Ray Van Wagner
Dr. Samuel Mudd.....	Charles Ferreira
Lewis Payne.....	Jerry Kerns
Edward Spangler.....	Danny Villa
Mary Surratt.....	Peggy Whitman
The Jury.....	David Conkle
	Mel Flores
	Mike Sanchez
	Mike Dobry

The Jury (cont.).....	Tommy Jacques
	Paul Smith
Mr. Bingham.....	Joe (José) Baptista
Colonel Burnett.....	Larry Mosher
Court Reporter.....	Dan Hanson
General Holt.....	Truman Fisher
Samuel Chester.....	Paul E. Richards*
William Browning.....	Joel Agnew
Joseph Burroughs.....	Henry Allen
Major Henry Rathbone.....	Rich Skoonberg
A Minister.....	Tom Ramirez
Officer Parker.....	Gerald Hiken*
David Bates.....	Alan Loeb
Dr. Robert Stone.....	Gerald Hiken
Louis Weichman.....	Bob Dicken
John Wilkes Booth.....	Paul E. Richards
Mary Todd Lincoln.....	Jackie Black
Rheba.....	Carla Horton
Boston Corbett.....	Tom Ramirez
Pope Pius IX.....	Paul E. Richards
1st Cardinal.....	Alan Loeb
2nd Cardinal.....	Tom Ramirez
Edwin Stanton.....	Gerald Hiken
Correspondents.....	Rich Skoonberg
	Cindy Fisher
	Alan Loeb
	Joel Agnew

\* By special arrangements with Actors Equity

This is the first time that Chabot has invited professionals, as well as members of the community to join our students in production. This student-community-professional combination of theatre people has been a memorable working-learning experience for our players and crews and the drama staff is grateful for the cooperation of all those who have helped make it possible.

Production Coordinator.....	Glenn DuBose
Technical Assistant.....	Walter Buettner
Stage Manager.....	Dennis Lauderdale
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Joel Agnew
Assistant Scenic Designer.....	Larry Hunter
Lighting Assistant.....	David Dwyer
Sound Technician.....	Stephen Luskow
Projections Technician.....	John Kock
Music Coordinator.....	Eugene Marker
Costume Mistress.....	Denice McBride
Wardrobe Mistress.....	Sally Enderlin
Make-up Mistresses.....	Shelley Werk
	Kathy Ranieri
Carpenter.....	Tom Wensemius
Properties Mistress.....	Lynn Duncan



## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Appearing by special arrangement with Actors Equity

Edgar Daniels (Reverdy Johnson) made his Broadway debut in the musical New Girl In Town, and went on to play roles in the Broadway productions of La Plume de Ma Tante, Caligula, and The Affair. He was Cardinal Wolsey in A Man For All Seasons, and Moriarty in the musical Baker Street. At the Lincoln Center Repertory Company, he appeared in Galileo, Tiger at the Gates and Cyrano de Bergerac. He has played roles at Dartmouth College, and with repertory companies in Milwaukee, Syracuse, N.Y., Hartford, Conn. and Ann Arbor, Mich. Television credits include "Car 54 Where Are You?", "Bonanza," "The High Chaparral" and the "U.S. Steel Hour." His most recent stage appearance was at Los Angeles' Music Center in Othello, starring James Earl Jones. Forthcoming films will include One Is a Lonely Number and Dime Box.

Gerald Hiken (Parker, Dr. Stone, Stanton) became familiar to Bay Area audiences in his many performances with the Stanford Repertory Theatre which included Inadmissible Evidence, The Cherry Orchard, Tartuffe, Cock-a-doodle Dandy, Antony and Cleopatra, The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window, and many others. Long active in the Broadway theatre and television, he has performed in recent years mostly on the West Coast, and is currently appearing throughout the Bay Area with his performing partner, Paul E. Richards in their own The New Theatre in Supermen and Swan Song. On television this season he has appeared on "Sarge," "Partridge Family," "Bobby Sherman Show," and is currently filming "Bonanza."

Paul E. Richards (Chester, Pope Pius IX, Booth) along with Gerald Hiken was active in the New York theatre before becoming a leading performer and teacher with the Stanford Repertory Theatre, and appeared in The Good-woman of Setzuan, The Cherry Orchard, The Chairs, The Beggar's Opera, Cock-a-doodle Dandy and All's Well That Ends Well. At Stanford he also directed his own play There Is a Meeting, and with Mr. Hiken is performing in their New Theatre in his own plays, including The Great Bolyavski and Bolyavski Lives.

Leslie Acuff (Anna Surratt) appeared on the Little Theatre stage in The Misanthrope, and was seen last spring in Uncle Tom's Cabin. Other performances include the H.A.R.D. production of Come Back Little Sheba, and the student production, The Imprisonment of Alan W. Ferguson.

Joel Agnew (William Browning) attended Chabot College before transferring to Hayward State College where he worked as technical assistant in the theatre. Now obtaining teaching credentials, he is at Mission San Jose High School where he designed and directed The American Dream. His professional career includes Fantasticks.

Henry Allen (Burroughs) appeared in Uncle Tom's Cabin last spring. He came to Chabot from Sacramento State College where he was in A View From the Bridge, Dandelion Wine and The Ivory Door. In community productions, he has appeared in The Bald Soprano and Oh Dad, Poor Dad.

Joe (José) Baptista (Mr. Bingham) has been performing in Bay Area community theatres since 1947. For H.A.R.D. he has appeared in Rashomon, Tiger at the Gates and Streetcar Named Desire. Other appearances include The Rainmaker and The Odd Couple, in addition to working in children's theatre at the Circle Star Theatre.

Jackie Black (Mary Todd Lincoln) is well known to the Bay Area community theatre audiences as an actress, set designer and director. She most recently directed A Lion in Winter for H.A.R.D. Community Players. She has played leading roles in A Streetcar Named Desire, Cat On a Hot Tin Roof, The Women, Toys in the Attic, Marty, Middle of the Night, and many more.

Bob Dicken (Louis Weichmann) appeared in six Chabot College productions, most recently as de Sade in Marat/Sade. As a student at San Francisco State College he appeared in Major Barbara. Television credits include "Seance" for Educational Television. He is currently enrolled in the American Conservatory Theatre's Training Congress.

Carla Horton (Rheba) has long been a regular in Chabot productions. Her credits include Golden Boy and Uncle Tom's Cabin onstage, and numerous jobs backstage on the productions during the past two years.

Cindy Fisher (Third Correspondent) will be remembered for her performance as Miss Ophelia in last year's Uncle Tom's Cabin. A youthful veteran of many productions in many places, she toured last spring on the Chabot College Spring Tour in Black Comedy.

Truman Fisher (General Holt) is at present an art instructor (Sculpture) on the Chabot Humanities Staff. His past stage experience was with the civic theatre in El Paso.

Alan Loebs (Bates, Cardinal, Correspondent), when at Hayward State, appeared in J. B., Tartuffe, Twelfth Night, A Lion in Winter, the opera The Merry Wives of Windsor. He has also appeared with the H.A.R.D. Players in A Lion in Winter. At present he is in the training school of San Francisco's Committee Theatre.

John McNeil (Doster) has appeared in many Chabot productions among which are Uncle Tom's Cabin, The Misanthrope, The Conductor and the Chabot College Players Spring Tour, Black Comedy.

Larry Mosher (Colonel Burnett) is an art instructor in the Humanities Division, teaching Ceramics and Drawing. This is his stage debut.

Tom Ramirez (Farmer, Minister, Corbett, 2nd Cardinal) has appeared in many productions at Hayward State, including Taming of the Shrew, Tartuffe, Stalag 17, J. B., and Twelfth Night. Musical performances include The Fantasticks and Little Mary Sunshine. As Drummond at Mount Eden High in Inherit the Wind, he received the Bank of America Drama Award.

Jim Shank (General Ewing) was last seen in Uncle Tom's Cabin as Simon Legree. Last year he also appeared in The Misanthrope and played a major role in the student production The Imprisonment of Alan W. Ferguson.

Richard Skoonberg (Major Rathbone) last performed in the Little Theatre in The Misanthrope. He is active in the Chabot Forensics program and the Readers' Theatre. Elsewhere he has acted in Spoon River Anthology and The Trojan Women, and has appeared with Berkeley's Acting Open Hand in Anagnorisis.

Coffee and cookies served at Intermission to benefit Associated Chabot Thespians.

#### Chabot College Drama Staff

Miss Kathleen Conneely, Mr. Merrill Curtis, Mr. Robert Dietle, Mr. Glenn DuBose, Mr. Herbert Kennedy, Mr. Norman Kirschbaum.

#### Board of Trustees, 1971-72

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Note: Five pages from Shyre's working script of The President Is Dead. This is an excellent example of the extensive revision he alluded to in the interview.

THE PRESIDENT IS DEAD

By Paul Shyre

*original first draft  
typewritten*

Copyright 1968  
162 West 56th St.  
New York, New York 10019  
Tel: 582-5379

Original in the Boston University Library  
Publication permission must be secured from the Library

*Paul Shyre*

1.

Act Iby  
Paul Huel

1967

April

ACT I....WASHINGTON D.C....~~April~~ 1865....THE UPPER PART OF THE STAGE CONSISTS OF A MILITARY COURTROOM. IN THE BACK IS THE PRISONER'S DOCK, DOORS ON EITHER SIDE. THE MILITARY TRIBUNAL SITS ON THE RIGHT. IN FRONT OF THEM A SMALL TABLE WHERE THE PROSECUTORS SIT. WITNESS CHAIR IS CENTER. TO THE LEFT ARE LARGE WINDOWS, AND IN FRONT OF THESE THE TABLE FOR THE DEFENSE ATTORNEYS ETC. THE LOWER PART OF THE STAGE HAS AN AREA WHERE SCENES CAN BE PLAYED WHEN NECESSARY. ON ONE SIDE OF THIS AREA IS A "BILLBOARD" OR "PRESS BOX" ~~XXXX~~ SECTION. THESE SIGNS WILL APPEAR EITHER BY THEMSELVES, OR WITH APPROPRIATE ACTION IN FRONT OF THEM AS THE PLAY PROGRESSES. ~~XXXXXXHGHUSEXKIGHTSXHXVXXXXXX~~ BEFORE THE PLAY STARTS THE CURTAIN IS UP AND SEEN ON STAGE, SPOTLIGHTED ON EITHER SIDE, ARE TWO LIFE SIZE FIGURES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND JOHN WILKES BOOTH. ~~THEY ARE EXTREMELY LIKELIKE IN APPEARANCE.~~ AS THE HOUSE LIGHTS DIM, A MILITARY BAND IS LOUDLY PLAYING A FUNERAL DIRGE. THE LIGHTS ON THE TWO FIGURES GO OUT, AND COME UP ON THE FIRST SCENE, THE OFFICE OF SENATOR REVERDY JOHNSON. HE IS SEATED AT HIS DESK FACING FRONT. BEHIND HIM, LOOKING OUT OF THE WINDOW, IS HIS ASSISTANT, <sup>signing hand</sup> DOSTER. OUTSIDE THE FUNERAL DIRGE IS STILL HEARD. REVERDY JOHNSON IS A ~~HOGE~~ <sup>HOGE</sup> MAN IN HIS SIXTIES. DOSTER IS A YOUNG MAN OF TWENTY.

Johnson- Where are they now?

Doster- Just turning down pennsylvania Avenue, Sir.

Johnson- Has the rain stopped?

Doster- No, Senator. But the people don't seem to mind; there must be thousands watching.

Johnson- Thousands?

Doster- The band is almost passing now. The horses are ~~moving~~ in a steady trot. Come and look, Sir.

Johnson- Noy I don't want to look. Can you see the coffin? the coffin?

Doster- Yes, Senator, it's passing by now. ~~The people are crying mostly. There's one woman hysterical with grief.~~ I can see Mrs. Lincoln with the two boys. Then General Grant. Secretary Stanton..

Johnson- Stanton?

Doster- There must be a cavalry of a ~~thamxxxx~~ hundred men.

2.

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Johnson- Dear ~~Father~~ Abraham. Can you see the Vice President?

Doster- Yes, he's behind Mr. Stanton's party.

Johnson- Behind? Yes, of course he would be..

Doster- They're nearing the rotunda now.

Johnson- And ~~thousands more will view the remains of "Honest Old Abe."~~ <sup>From the rotunda</sup> Our Father ~~is in heaven indeed.~~ What's the matter with you, Doster?

Doster- Sir?

Johnson- ~~You're crying, my boy. I see those tears in your eyes. You never met Mr. Lincoln?~~

Doster- No.

Johnson- You ~~even~~ said he was a terrible politician.

Doster- ~~He was.~~ <sup>I know.</sup>

Johnson- And, my boy, you ~~predicted~~ <sup>said</sup> he would never be re-elected once the war ended.

Doster- ~~I would have been right.~~ <sup>He didn't, not.</sup>

Johnson- Then why those tears?

Doster- Because I loved him. ~~as a man.~~ I cannot help what I feel, Senator.

Johnson- Shut that window, and come over here, my boy.

Doster- Yes, Sir. (Shuts window, the music is fainter)

Johnson- How old are you, Doster?

Doster- Twenty, Sir.

Johnson- And how long now have you been my ~~secretary?~~ <sup>in my employ?</sup>

Doster- Two weeks five days, ~~seventeen hours.~~ <sup>and</sup> Sir.

Johnson- (Checking his watch) And eleven minutes, ~~if my watch is correct.~~ <sup>about</sup>

Did you learn such ~~prudence~~ <sup>compassion</sup> at Harvard?

Doster- I <sup>did</sup> studied law at Harvard, Senator. ~~As you know I was the youngest to receive a degree...~~

Johnson- Yes, yes, I ~~know all about how brilliant you are.~~ I have your dossier in my drawer. But why should you want to work for me? ~~I'm only a Senator, and an odd one at that.~~

Doster- ~~I feel~~ <sup>When you were the</sup> It is a great privilege to be with you, Sir. ~~As former Attorney-General of the United States, your legal cleverness--~~

Johnson- Yes, yes, we've been through how brilliant I am too. However, <sup>At the</sup> moment, I am merely <sup>the acting</sup> a Senator from Maryland. ~~How you earned such a trust~~

Doster- ~~And one of the foremost legal lights in America.~~ <sup>in this and the great?</sup>

3.

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Johnson- ~~Oh, for God's sake, sit down and stop complimenting me!~~ *You're a close friend to Robert Lincoln, isn't you?* And I'm not your old grandfather either. ~~I could be your grandfather, you know. I'm old enough and fat enough, and sluggish too.~~

Doster- ~~Nonsense. You're quite spry, Senator.~~ *We were at Harvard together.*

Johnson- ~~Tell, thank you, Doster. Compared to you, my boy, and right now that's exactly what I'm doing. I am old and fat and sluggish. I'm a disagreeable old windy widower, who should have retired ages ago.~~

Doster- ~~I'm sorry, Senator, but I do have the right to disagree with you. Nothing annoys me more than hearing the elderly deprecate themselves.~~

Johnson- ~~At least you admit I'm elderly.~~ (A GUN SALUTE IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE) Don't be frightened. Those are <sup>salutes</sup> the guns of war. They're for him. ~~(HE REMOVES A FLASK OF BRANDY FROM HIS DESK AND POURS HIMSELF A DRINK)~~

Doster- ~~Sir, you promised you wouldn't.~~

Johnson- ~~I must give my own salute. (TOASTING) To Father Abraham! Deliverer of the darkies... preserver of copperhead unity... blessing of the meek. (DRINKS)~~

(SINGS) "Oh, say can you see,"

John Wilkes Booth on your knees.

Shere so proudly he fled,

Till they shot him in the head. (LAUGHS) *An* The entire nation is in

mourning today, ~~except for me.~~ Not one office is open, ~~save this one.~~ *Go home, Doster.* Doster, I won't keep you today. ~~Go on.~~

Doster- But, Sir—

Johnson- ~~I'll be all right.~~ I want to be by myself.

Doster- I...I'll wait downstairs for you. (EXITS)

Johnson- ~~But I don't want you to—! Oh well, *let's go.*~~ (TAKES ANOTHER DRINK FROM FLASK, THEN (GOES TO WINDOW, OPENING IT WIDE. THE FUNERAL BAND IS LOUDER

AGAIN) And now, Father Abraham, the avengers will find you some proper scapegoats.

(DOSTER RE ENTERS) ~~I thought I told you I wanted to be alone.~~

Doster- I'm sorry, Senator, but there's a young lady here to see you. It's most urgent.

Johnson- Who is she?

Doster- I'm afraid it's Mrs. Surratt's daughter again. She insists on seeing you.

Johnson- I won't see her. ~~Tell her I'm at the funeral.~~ (ANNA SURRATT ENTERS. SHE IS AN ATTRACTIVE YOUNG LADY IN HER EARLY TWENTIES)

Anna- I'm sorry, but I knew you <sup>wer</sup> here.

Johnson- My dear young lady, you're wasting your time. ~~Now go away and leave me alone.~~

Anna- I won't go away. My mother insists I speak with you.

4.

Johnson- Your mother is on trial for her life, and I can't save it for her. There are other ~~defense~~ attorneys. General Ewing is a competent man; go to him.

Anna- My mother is an innocent woman. You know she is innocent. Why won't you defend her?

Johnson- You're wasting my time, young lady. Your mother will be found guilty along with the rest of them.

Anna- Guilty of what?

Johnson- Of befriending ~~Watts~~ Booth, which makes her, I suppose, a conspirator along with the others.

Anna- You led her to believe you could help her. You swore to defend her.

Johnson- Defend? A civil case tried before a military tribunal? From the start the whole thing is illegal. I tell you, there's nothing I can do for your mother. She will be found guilty with the rest of them.

Anna- And hanged?

Johnson- Oh, nonsense! They may be barbarians <sup>here</sup> in the North, but no woman has ever been hanged before. ~~She's a woman~~ She'll get off lightly.

Anna- You have not even tried to see her. You ~~deserted her~~. Do you know what they have done to my mother? Mr. Stanton ordered this...a large canvas hood, placed over the heads of all the defendants. She is in agony; it covers her entire face and head. There are cords attached. She cannot see daylight. She has to be fed through a small slit where the mouth is. Heavy cotton pads press upon her eyes until she cannot bear the pain any longer! The only one who has <sup>spoken to</sup> her is <sup>her father</sup> ~~her priest~~, and yet she cannot <sup>see or</sup> hear him. Senator, you promised to defend my mother. Why have you withdrawn?

Johnson- What can I say to make you understand? It will be a mock trial. There isn't the slightest chance of exoneration. But you mustn't worry, ~~about your mother~~. I know she'll get off lightly.

Anna- Before a military court?

Johnson- Generals have wives and daughters. ~~She will be found guilty and her~~ sentence will be commuted. Now look, Miss Surratt, be thankful, ~~for her~~. The others will be hanged, I assure you.

Anna- You don't give her much hope.

Johnson- What good is hope for her? Lincoln is dead. <sup>Booth</sup> The one man who could have saved your mother was shot, ~~in a burning barn in Maryland~~.

5.

Anna- Is it your own reputation that worries you, Senator?

Johnson- Now don't try to intimidate me, Miss. It won't do you a bit of good. You see, I have very weak blood according to my doctors, and they don't want me to upset myself. Now if I were to resume the defense of your mother, I'd get very gngry with that so-called <sup>tribunal</sup> jury, and I might say things that would get me hanged as well. Now, for heaven's sake, don't sulk, ~~and get that pouting look off your face.~~

Anna- (Quietly) There is no hope for my mother.

Johnson- That's ridiculous. If anyone gets off at that trial your mother will.

Anna- Mr. Stanton wants my mother to die. There will be some false testimony, I know there will.

Johnson- False testimony? <sup>from whom?</sup> ~~And who is the perjurer?~~

Anna- Louis Weichman. He has had private visits from Secretary Stanton. He will lie when he testifies, believe me.

Johnson- Why should ~~Mr.~~ Weichman want to perjure himself?

Anna- To save his own neck. Stanton promised him his freedom.

Johnson- Mr. Weichman was a boarder in your mother's house. It is only natural that he should be called to testify.

Anna- Is ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> natural that he should not be in the prisoner's box along with the others? When the evidence is more against him than my mother?

Johnson- What evidence?

Anna- He knew everyone in our house. It was he who introduced Payne and Atzerodt to the household. Payne was even wearing Weichman's boots when captured. And now look at this: <sup>(SHE PRODUCES A TELEGRAM)</sup> I found this hidden in his room. It's a telegram to ~~Mr.~~ Weichman and it's signed John Wilkes Booth.

Johnson- (READING IT) Why should Booth contact him?

Anna- My mother treated him like her own son. My brother, ~~as you may know,~~ went to college with him. I ~~could never stand him.~~ Why should Booth send him a wire just a week before the assassination?

Johnson- ~~Indeed, Miss, why should he?~~ What else do you know?

Anna- (PRODUCING LETTER) This is a letter to Colonel Burnett from Weichman. It arrived yesterday.

Johnson- How did you get ahold of this, may I ask?

APPENDIX K  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK



**NEW YORK, NEW YORK**  
 a celebration in poems  
 directed by Paul Shyre

Rae Allen  
 Leonard Frey  
 Christopher Hewett  
 Aline MacMahon  
 James Patterson  
 Eli Wallach

Monday, May 25th.  
 at the  
 Circle in the Square Theatre  
 8:30 P.M.  
 \$10 per seat (tax-deductible)  
 at the door or write:  
 "NEW YORK, NEW YORK"  
 The New York Quarterly  
 54 West 40th St.  
 Room 69  
 New York, N.Y. 10018





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THE THEATRE GUILD, INC./HOLLAND AMERICA CRUISES  
present

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# THEATRE AT SEA

## SS ROTTERDAM

FROM NEW YORK . . . . . APRIL 17, 1975  
FROM FT. LAUDERDALE . . APRIL 19, 1975

Captain: A. H. LAGAAY  
Hotel Manager: W. DIRKSEN Cruise Director: SEAN MEANEY



---

THURSDAY, MAY 1, 1975 at 10.00 p.m.

Cyril Ritchard

Lillian Gish	John Raitt
Tammy Grimes	Lynn Redgrave
Larry Kert	George Rose
Patrice Munsel	Dick Shawn
Mildred Natwick	Paul Shyre

Christopher Hewett

IN

"REQUESTS"

PART I

"SURPRISE"

PART II

"NEW YORK! NEW YORK!"

Adapted by PAUL SHYRE

Staged by CHRISTOPHER HEWETT

The Theatre Guild gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following  
passengers: Everett Baker, Lola Frantz, Helen Harwood, Alex Lopez,  
Bruce Quinn, Jean White, Nancy White and Walter White.

Conductor <b>JOHN LESKO</b>	Scenery by <b>BOB ROGERS</b>	Assistant Conductor <b>WOODY KESSLER</b>
Stage Manager <b>FRANK BIRT</b>	Clarinetist <b>ROMEO PENQUE</b>	Assistant Stage Manager <b>DANA GODFREY</b>
Producer <b>MARILYN C. LANGNER</b>	Associate Producer <b>MERLE D. KING</b>	

Stage Managers: Clint Jakeman & James Frasher

APPENDIX L

AN UNPLEASANT EVENING WITH H. L. MENCKEN

**"GORGEOUS!"**

- Clive Barnes, N.Y. Times

**"IRRESISTIBLE!"**

- Doug Watt, Daily News

**"MENCKEN  
LIVES!"**

- Martin Gottfried, N.Y. POST



Edgar Lansbury, Joseph Berub and Torquay Company  
present

**PAUL SHYRE**

in

**BLASTS AND BRAVOS:**

an evening with **H.L. Mencken**

Adapted by  
**PAUL SHYRE**

Production Designed by  
**ELDON ELDER**

Incidental Music by  
**ROBERT RINES**

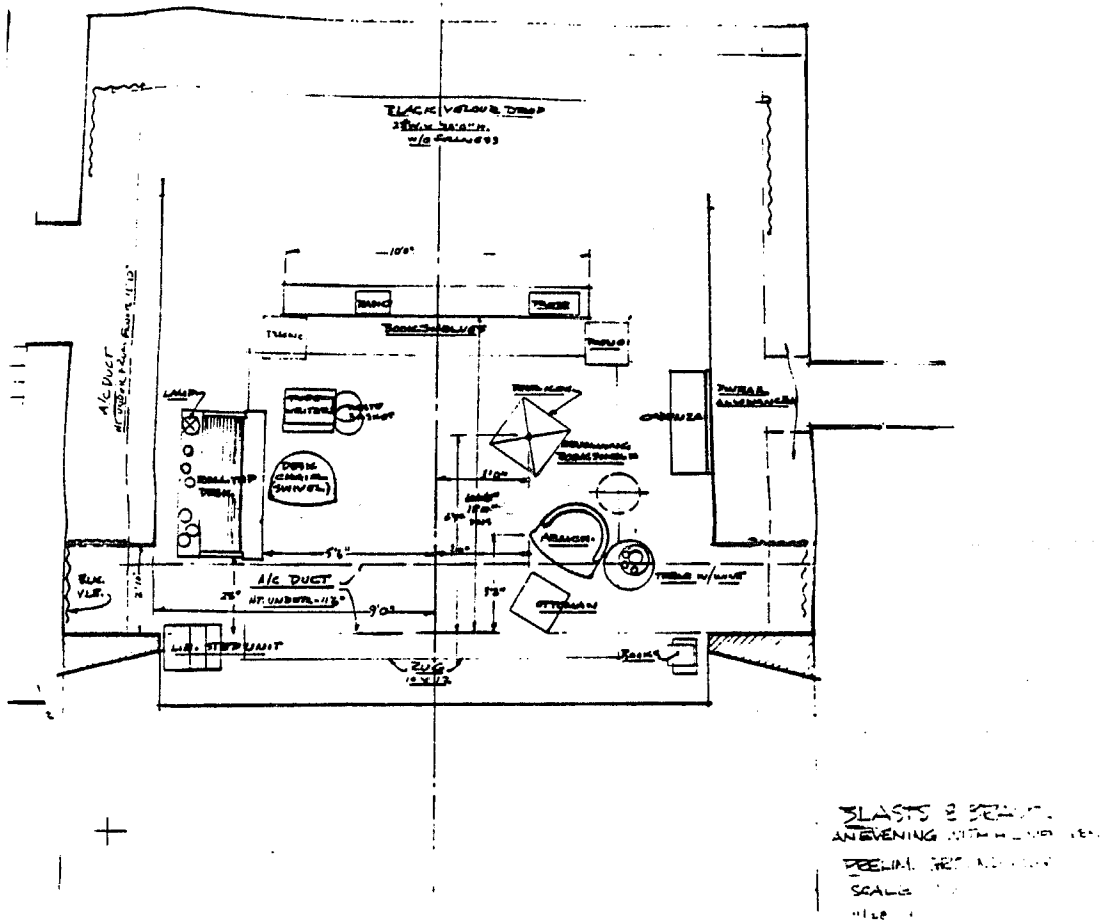
Production Stage Manager  
**CLINT JAKEMAN**

(212) 989-2020

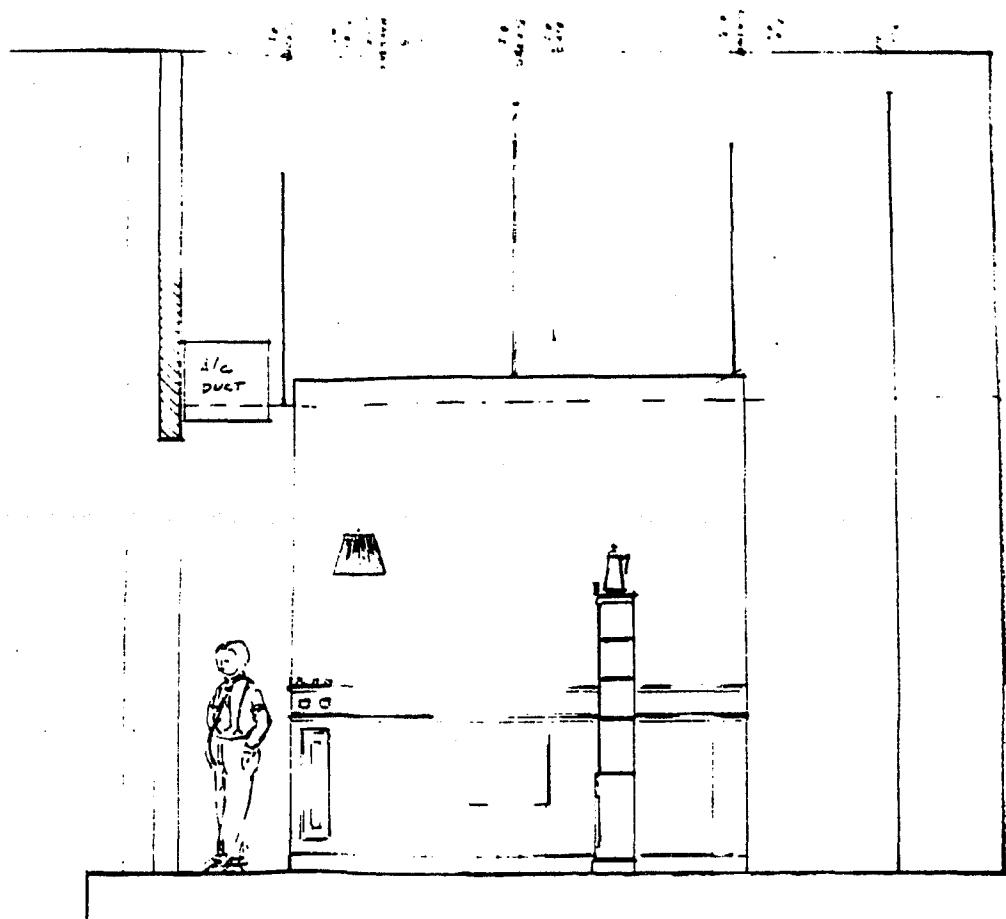
**CHERRY LANE THEATRE 38 COMMERCE ST.**



Paul Shyre in costume as H. L. Mencken



Overhead view of stage setting for Mencken show.



Offstage side view of Mencken set

THE THEATRE GUILD, INC./HOLLAND AMERICA CRUISES

present



# THEATRE AT SEA

SS ROTTERDAM

FROM NEW YORK . . . . . APRIL 17, 1975  
FROM FT. LAUDERDALE . . APRIL 19, 1975

Captain: A. H. LAGAAY

Hotel Manager: W. DIRKSEN Cruise Director: SEAN MEANEY



SUNDAY, APRIL 27 at 8.15 and 10.00 p.m.

PAUL SHYRE

in

## BLASTS AND BRAVOS: An Evening With H. L. MENCKEN

Adapted by  
PAUL SHYRE

Stage Manager  
CLINT JAKEMAN

The action takes place in the study of H. L. Mencken's home  
in Baltimore in 1930

### Introduction: Miss Lillan Gish

PAUL SHYRE occupies a unique position in the theatre. He adapted and acted in Saul O'Casey's pictures in the *Hallway* and *I Knock At The Door* for presentation on Broadway. For off-Broadway he adapted and directed O'Casey's *Drums Under the Windows*, co-produced his plays *Purple Dust* and *Cock-A-Doyle Dandy* and acted in all three offerings. Mr. Shyre co-authored, directed and performed in a dramatic version of John Dos Passos' *U.S.A.*, adapted and directed Strindberg's *Creditors* and directed O'Neill's *Diff'rent* and *The Long Voyage Home*—all for off-Broadway. His play *The Child Buyer*, based on John Hersey's novel, was produced in New York by the Theatre Guild and his *A Whitman Portrait* was produced both in New York and London. Mr. Shyre has received the Vernon Rice Drama Desk Award, the Brandeis University Theatre Arts Award, and "Obie" Award and a nomination for an Antoinette Perry Award for *I Knock at the Door*. Last season, Mr. Shyre both adapted and directed *Will Rogers' U.S.A.*, starring James Whitmore, at the Helen Hayes Theatre. He recently returned from Dublin, where he directed a new play, *The Moran Yara*, starring Siobhán McKenna, at the Olympia Theatre, and he has just finished his adaptation of Janet Flanner's *Paris Was Yesterday*, which he will direct later this season.

#### NOTES ON H. L. MENCKEN

Henry Louis Mencken was born in Baltimore, in 1880, and died in Baltimore in 1956. He began his long career as a journalist, critic, and philologist on the *Baltimore Morning Herald* in 1899. He was co-editor of *The Smart Set* with George Jean Nathan, and with Nathan he founded *The American Mercury*.

At his best he offered the young people the joy of seeing the enemy hogged and handcuffed, and forever put in its place. The *New York Times* once called him the most powerful private citizen in the United States.

There was no phase of American life upon which he failed to comment, and what he saw usually displeased him. He never believed in any afterlife, and once remarked that if he was mistaken about the likelihood of an afterlife, he would advance toward the throne of God and say, "Gentlemen, I was wrong".

He left a sealed envelope in a strong box to be opened after his death. It contained only three words: "Don't overplay it."

Here are some of his remarks:

Whenever you hear a man speak of his love for his country, it's a sure sign that he expects to be paid for it.

Self-Respect... The secure feeling that no one, as yet, is suspicious.

A Judge... A law student who marks his own examination papers.

Archbishop... A Christian ecclesiastic of a rank superior to that attained by Christ.

Adultery... The application of democracy to love.

Conscience... The inner voice which warns us that someone may be looking.

Conductor	Scenery by	Assistant Conductor
JOHN LESKO	BOB ROGERS	WOODY KESSLER
Stage Manager	Clarinetist	Assistant Stage Manager
FRANK BIRT	ROMEO PENQUE	DANA GODFREY
Producer	Associate Producer	
MARILYN C. LANGNER	MERLE D. KING	

APPENDIX M  
PARIS WAS YESTERDAY





**CELESTE HOLM**

**In**

**"PARIS WAS YESTERDAY"**

**February 17 - March 12**



Celeste Holm in costume as Janet Flanner: Paris  
Was Yesterday.



Celeste Holm in setting for Paris Was Yesterday.



PARIS WAS YESTERDAY

by

Janet Flanner

Adapted

by

Paul Shyre

First draft Sept. '74

(THE SETTING IS AS FOLLOWS: A LARGE MOTION PICTURE SCREEN, UP STAGE CENTER, UPON WHICH IS ARRANGED A MONTAGE OF PHOTOGRAPHS, PERHAPS LIKE A CHESS BOARD. AMONG THE MANY FACES, SOME OF THE FOLLOWING: PICASSO, JOSEPHINE BAKER, MARSHALL PETAIN, ISADORA DUNCAN, THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF WINDSOR, QUEEN MARY, GENERAL DE GAULLE, MARLENE DIETRICH, SARAH BERNHARDT, COCO CHANEL, ELSA MAXWELL, HITLER, EDITH PIAF, AND OTHERS. DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE SCREEN IS A PODIUM. THE COLORS OF THE SET ARE BOTH AMERICAN AND FRENCH. THERE IS NO FRONT CURTAIN.

WHEN THE PLAY BEGINS, JANET FLANNER ENTERS, AND GOES DIRECTLY TO THE PODIUM. SHE CARRIES IN HER ARMS A LARGE ASSORTMENT OF PAPERS, BOOKS, MAGAZINES, ETC., WHICH SHE ARRANGES ON THE PODIUM, AS SHE SPEAKS:)

Good evening, my name is Janet Flanner, and I'm here tonight to reminisce with you in what might turn out to be, more than anything else, an evening of obituaries.

Most of the people I knew are, I'm sorry to say, now dead. But the memories of them are quite clear. I am a journalist by profession, and I have lived in Paris for the last fifty years, where I write under the pen name of Genet for The New Yorker Magazine. I started in 1925, the year the magazine began. My LETTER FROM PARIS, continues to be one of its regular features.

The name Genet was not selected by me, but by Harold Ross, then the editor of The New Yorker. I don't know why he chose the name Genet; he probably made it up. Perhaps he thought Genet was the French word for Janet -- I don't know. It's possible, knowing Ross.

This little thing on my lapel means that I have received The French Legion of Honor. My memory is cracking up, but I know it was a longish time ago.

I suppose at this point, I should say a few things about my childhood.

Well, I did grow up -- in Indianapolis, Indiana, the daughter of a man who founded a settlement-house for blacks before the turn of the century. Flanner House still exists. I remember sitting on the knee of Booker T. Washington, when I was seven years old. He put his arm around me and said, "You're not afraid of me because I'm very, very black, are you?" I said, "Why should I be, it makes no difference." You see, I was already a pretty educated child.

Now Mr. Washington was no Harry Belafonte; he was quite homely, but he had such gentleness, and sweetness in his face and in his actions, and in his manners! The night that I sat on Booker T. Washington's knee was exciting. We had a black servant there, who, when he heard the dinner guest was black, got very angry. He said he would not wait on another black man, but my mother told him he could leave. Of course, when he found out that Washington was famous, he got curious, and decided to stay.

Later on I worked for a girls reform school in Pennsylvania. It was one of the most charming places I've ever seen. In June it was over-powered with red roses. There were cottages for the girls, a beautiful old, red brick mansion, a schoolhouse with no walls, and no gates. But the girls did sneak out at night.

In my early twenties, I got a job as film critic, for the Indianapolis Star. I was the first movie critic in America, I believe. I was paid twenty-five dollars a week, and I asked for a raise. The editor called me a greedy little pig, but I did get a five dollar raise. But from 1921 on I spent most of my life in Paris. And there I very early met the artists and writers, who were struggling and hoping for fame and money. How did I meet them? It was easy. You couldn't avoid meeting them if you went to the cafes. I spent a lot of time at The Cafe Deux Magots, and they all went there.

(SHE LIGHTS THE FIRST OF MANY CIGARETTES)

Yes, I smoke, but my lungs are in excellent shape, which isn't bad for a chain-smoker in her eighties.

You know, I love to write. I've never wanted to do anything else. I'd rather write than eat. I have no idea if I write like a woman. I am a woman. I don't write as a bearded man, you know. But I'm not a very domesticated person, I've always lived in hotels. I don't know how to cook, I don't even know how to sew.

One thing is sure, that although I've lived in Paris for over fifty years, I was never taken for a Frenchman.

I am what you call in polite society, a bachelor woman. And since I can't cook, sew or keep house, I live in hotels. Now, when I move into a hotel, what I really want is not just a room and bath, but trees. When I was in the Hotel Continental, I knew every tree across the way in the Tuileries. And I'm so glad that where I live now (I won't tell you which hotel, because it sounds terribly above my station), I can see the top of the Eiffel Tower, or rather the light on the top of the Eiffel Tower. What do you call it? Well, I guess you call it the light on the top of the Eiffel Tower. Anyway, it takes sixteen seconds to go around, by my count. I know the blink of it, the look of it and the identity of it. I'll tell you one thing, when I move into a hotel, it's like a snail getting into a shell.



But I am nothing but American. You either belong to a nation or not. I'm a foreigner living for a very long time in France.

But things in America change so quickly. Take fashion, for instance. When girls are wearing their skirts up to the -- excuse the expression -- crotch, you can't call this one of the best vestmentary periods. And what an appetite for sexuality we Americans have lately! Not since the early Romans, when after they'd eaten, gorged and debauched all the boys, the girls already having been debauched, and tickled the backs of their throats with a scarlet feather in order to start all over again, has one seen such carryings on. But in America we pick things up quickly, eat more than our fill, and then don't even lick up the crumbs. I mean, for instance, the shiftiness of American advertising is absolutely vomitorious. The gullibility of the American public is incredible.

(LIGHTS CHANGE)

But enough of the present. Let me reflect back over those years. Back to 1925, say, when it all started for your foreign correspondent.

APPENDIX N

AH, MEN

AH, MEN

by

Paul Shyre, 1980

ACT I

The cast consists of THREE ACTORS and a FEMALE NARRATOR. The THREE ACTORS should be varied in type, i.e., cultured British accent to American Bronx. The NARRATOR sits separate from the OTHERS, on a stool, a lectern in front of it, holding the script. The narration should be done by a WOMAN. Her comments are always strictly from the female point of view, and though SHE will make many ironic comments, SHE is never condescending or patronizing. The setting is simple, stools and chairs, screens, a prop table that contains some costume pieces, etc. The MEN are uniformly dressed in strictly formal attire: top hats, canes, white ties. THEY enter through the screens at the opening and do a chorus of the song "BIG MAN."

COMPANY

I WAS A BIG MAN YESTERDAY  
 BUT BOY, YOU OUGHTA SEE ME NOW.  
 A-WELL, I TALKED BIG YESTERDAY,  
 BUT BOY, YOU OUGHTA SEE ME NOW.  
 I BRAGGED TOO LONG THAT YOUR LOVE WAS STRONG,  
 THERE'D NEVER BE ANOTHER GUY,  
 BUT YOU SAID MORE WHEN YOU WHISPERED YOUR GOODBYE.  
 I WAS A BIG MAN YESTERDAY,  
 BUT BOY, YOU OUGHTA SEE ME NOW!

(After the song THEY seat themselves,  
 as the light comes up on the NARRATOR)

NARRATOR

Good evening, and welcome to the world of men. Not mankind, just man, or men. This is a play about men, not as they should be or, for that matter, even want to be. It's about their flaws, their foolishness, their power, and their lack of power. Consult any leading dictionary and you'll find some strange definitions. Here are some: MAN ... a husband or a lover, the head of a coin in tossing, an exclamatory form of address in common use all over South Africa, and so forth. There are many expressions in which the word MAN is used. For instance, the man in the street, the man in the moon, or a man-box ... an old expression for a coffin. Then, of course, there is a man-trap, which actually refers to the female pudenda, of all things. So you see, MAN can mean many things. Tonight

we'll be dealing with the five most common forms of men ... Sons, Brothers, Lovers, Husbands, and Fathers. There will be a song or two as we go along, and I shall be here to keep a sane hold on things as we observe how men come to terms with their own maleness as they move through time as Sons, Brothers, Lovers, Husbands, and Fathers. And, perhaps, when we've finished you may come to a better understanding of these creatures known as:

PLAYER A  
Bloses.

PLAYER B  
Ducks.

Buggers.

PLAYER C

Mugs. NARRATOR

PLATEAU C  
Messieurs.

Signorinos. PLAYER B

Chanticleers. PLAYER A

Peacocks.

NARRATOR

Stallions. PLAYER B

Bucks. PLAYER C

Geldings. PLAYER B

Stags. PLAYER A

NARRATOR

And cock-a-doodle doos! So here they are. The latest models, all sizes and shapes, for better and for worse. Let us begin with Part One: Sons.

George Bernard Shaw was never quite sure what kind of a son he was. To him a mother was not a person to lean

on, but a person to make leaning unnecessary. I couldn't agree with him more.

PLAYER C

(Recites Shaw selection)

Technically speaking I should say she was the worst mother conceivable, always, however, within the limits of the fact that she was incapable of unkindness to any person or thing whatsoever. But if such a thing as a maternity welfare center had been established in Ireland in her time, and she had been induced to visit it, every precept of it would have been laughably strange to her. I myself was never on bad terms with my mother: we lived together until I was forty-two years old, absolutely without the smallest friction of any kind; yet when her death set me thinking curiously about our relations, I realized that I knew very little about her. Introduce me to a strange woman who was a child when I was a child, a girl when I was a boy, and if we take naturally to one another I will know more of her at the end of forty days than I knew of my mother at the end of forty years. A contemporary stranger is a novelty, but a mother is like a broomstick or like the sun in the heavens, it does not matter which; the broomstick is there and the sun is there; and whether the child is beaten by it or warmed by it, it accepts it as a fact in nature ...

NARRATOR

I remember some lines from a poem I once read, which goes:

"Sons are what their mothers are.  
No fondest father's fondest care  
Can fashion so the infant heart."

Listen as the novelist Henry Miller recalls his unusual mother:

PLAYER B

(Recites Henry Miller selection)

Even the earliest memories of my mother are unhappy ones. I remember sitting by the stove in the kitchen and talking to her. Mostly she was scolding me. Once she grew a wart on her finger. She said to me, "Henry," (remember I'm only four years old) "what should I do?" I said, "Cut it off with the scissors." The wart! You don't cut off a wart! So she got blood poisoning. Two days later she came to me with her hand bandaged and she says, "And you told me to cut it off!" And BANG, BANG, she slaps me. Slaps me! For punishment. For telling her to do this! how do you like a mother who does that?

My sister was born mentally retarded; she had the intelligence of a child of about eight or ten. She was a great burden in my childhood because I had to defend her when the kids called, "Crazy Loretta, crazy Loretta!"

They made fun of her, pulled her hair, called her names. It was terrible.

You see, my sister couldn't attend school because she was so backward. So my mother decided to teach her herself. My mother was never meant to be a teacher. She was terrible. She used to scold her, crack her, fly into a rage. She'd say, "How much is two times two?" and my sister would say, "Five, no -- seven, no -- three." Just wild. Bang. Another slap or crack. Then my mother would turn to me and say, "Why do I have to bear this cross? What did I do to be punished so?" Asked me, a little boy. "Why is God punishing me??" You can see what kind of woman she was. Stupid? Worse than that.

The neighbors said she loved me. They said she was really very fond of me and all that. But I never felt any warmth from her. She never kissed me, never hugged me. I don't ever remember going to her and putting my arms around her.

I had no real contact with my mother when I was grown. I saw her briefly when I came back from Europe after being away ten years. But after that I had no contact with her until she became ill. Then I went to see her. Still the same problem -- we had nothing in common. The horrible thing was that she was really dying this time. (You see, once before I had gone to see her when she was supposed to be dying.) She lasted three months before passing away. That was a terrible period for me. I went to see her every day. But even when dying she was that same tyrannical person. I said to her, "Look, you're in bed. You can't get up." I didn't say, "You're going to die but I implied it. "For the first time in my life I'm going to tell you what to do. I'm giving the orders now." She rose up in bed, shaking her finger at me. "You can't do that," she yells. There she was, on her deathbed, and I had to push her down with my hands around her throat. A moment later I was in the hall sobbing like a child.

Sometimes now in bed I say to myself, you don't have any enemies. There are no people you hate. How is it you can't conjure up a better image of your mother? Suppose you died tomorrow and there is a hereafter, and you encounter her. What are you going to say when you face her? I can tell you now she'll have the last word.

A weird thing happened when we were burying her. It was a freezing cold day with snow coming down thick. They couldn't get the coffin angled right to lower it into the grave. It was as if she was still resisting us. Even in the funeral parlor, before that, where she was on view for six days, every time I bent over her, one of the eyes would open and stare at me.

## NARRATOR

A man, in general, consists of three things: a mind, a body, and an imagination. His body is faulty, his mind untrustworthy, but I must say his imagination has made him remarkable. Groucho Marx owed a great deal of his success to his parents. His father gave all his old clothes to Groucho's grandfather, even though he had been dead for seven years. Groucho was born and raised in New York City, once referred to as the nation's thyroid gland.

## PLAYER C

(Recites Groucho Marx selection)

My pop was a tailor, and sometimes he made as much as eighteen dollars a week. But he was no ordinary tailor. His record as the most inept tailor that Yorkville ever produced has never been approached. This could even include parts of Brooklyn and the Bronx.

To his customers he was known as "Misfit Sam." He was the only tailor I ever heard of who refused to use a tape measure. A tape measure might be all right for an undertaker, he maintained, but not for a tailor. Pop boasted that he could size up a man just by looking at him, and turn out a perfect fit. The results of his appraisals were about as accurate as Chamberlain's predictions about Hitler.

Our neighborhood was full of Pop's customers. They were easily recognizable in the street, for they all walked around with one trouser leg shorter than the other. The result was that my father never had the same customers twice.

How my mother managed is a mystery beyond explaining. I tell you, Alexander Hamilton may have been the greatest Secretary of the Treasury, but I would have liked to see him handle my mother's job as skillfully as she did.

## NARRATOR

Broken down into his elements, the average man is 65% oxygen, 18% carbon, 9% hydrogen, and smaller amounts of potassium, sulphur, chlorine, sodium, and magnesium, with traces of iron, iodine, zinc, fluorine, and other elements. This gives him enough water to fill a ten-gallon barrel, enough fat for seven bars of soap, enough phosphorus for two thousand matches, and enough iron for a three inch nail. Thus created, his attachment to his parents hasn't wavered since time began. The late Lucky Luciano was an illiterate genius who couldn't spell, but he was a master of organization ... namely, the Mafia. He could control a whole network of mobsters, but not his own father.

APPENDIX O  
GENERAL APPENDIX



## THEATRE AWARDS

## MEDAL

STARK YOUNG was born in Como, Mississippi in 1881. He received his B.A. from the University of Mississippi and his M.A. from Columbia University in New York.

After many rewarding years of teaching at the University of Mississippi, University of Texas, and Amherst, Mr. Young decided that the time had come for him to resign from college work. In New York he devoted himself to the theatre as an editor and drama critic for The New Republic, as drama critic for The New York Times, and as an editor of the Theatre Arts Monthly. From newspaper and magazine work, he turned to general writing.

He has written a number of valuable books on the theory and philosophy of the theatre, among them "Glasgow", "The Flower in Drama", and "The Theatre". He has begun an autobiography "The Pavilion" and wrote a well-remembered novel "So Red the Rose". His translations include: Machiavelli's classic Italian comedy *La Mandragola*, and the definitive English translations of Chekhov's plays (available in the Modern Library Series.)

Equally as scholar, teacher, author, drama critic, and translator, Mr. Young has made great contributions to the growth of the American theatre.

## GRANT

PAUL SHYRE was born in New York City on March 8, 1926. He is a graduate of the University of Florida, the American Academy of Dramatic Art and has been a student of Harold Clurman.

Although he had already directed and acted in stock and television, it was by way of Sean O'Casey's works that Paul Shyre's talent and insight really emerged. He adapted, produced and acted in "I Knock At The Door" and "Pictures in the Hallway" which are performances in concert reading style. He helped produce and acted in "Purple Dust". Much of the recent revival of interest in O'Casey is attributed to Mr. Shyre's efforts. Paul Shyre has received the Drama Desk Award for his outstanding contribution to off-Broadway theatre.

Citation from program of the Brandeis University  
Creative Arts Awards, Ambassador Hotel, New York City,  
March 5, 1958.

FEDERATION OF NEW YORK AND YOUNG WOMEN'S HEBREW ASSOCIATION  
 100 Madison Avenue at 92nd Street • New York 23, N. Y. • ATwater 9-2400

CONFIDENTIAL

CARL UERONT  
 Executive Director

June 10, 1959

Mr. Paul Shyre  
 162 West 56th Street  
 New York, New York

Dear Mr. Shyre:

This will confirm our conversation when you so kindly volunteered to direct the series of 30 poetry readings primarily of lyric poetry, but not excluding other forms of poetry as well as verse plays. The budget is attached. Admission will be free to the public and the readings will be held in the auditorium which will be assigned to you from 4:00-7:30.

Since you will not receive a salary for this position beyond the small sum provided in the budget for expenses, it is understood that you may drop this activity at any time if you feel that it interferes with your professional commitments. Similarly, the I say circumstances the activity at the discretion of the Educational Director. It is also understood that you will not be responsible for any other poetry readings by authors or poets that may be given in the 'Y with or without admission charge.

I believe it will help you to know that beyond the use of the auditorium on Thursday from 4:00-7:30 for rehearsal and performance, and Room 261 from 12:00-3:00, no other facilities are likely to be available. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the authors will be able to use any of the facilities that the 'Y has for its regular activities, such as phone services or message.

In order to save as much of your time as possible, you will be dealing only with no on all questions of policy as well as administrative details, and the authors will be dealing only with you. Finally, I am assuming that the activity meets with the approval and the conditions laid down by Authors' Equity in a conversation you had with Angus Dunham.

Sincerely,

*William Folowsky*

William Folowsky  
 Educational Director

WFB:s

A MEMBER OF THE FEDERATION OF JEWISH PHILANTHROPIES OF NEW YORK



## POETRY GROUP PLAYERS

presents

## "Pot-Pourri of Poets"

November 5, 1959

6:15 - 7:30

Including: Whitman, Shakespeare, Millay, Poe  
 Belloc, Pasternak, V. Lindsay, Rilke  
 and others.

Cast: From left to right on stage

STEPHEN ELLIOTT

BLANCHE YURKA

RAE ALLEN

WILLIAM WINDOM

Directed by PAUL SHYRE

There will be a ten minute intermission.

\*\*\*\*\*

Next Thursday - November 12 - 6:15

Sada Thompson

Will Geer

Frederick Rolf

Peggy Wood

Selections from early American poets.

The Poetry Center  
presents  
THE POETRY GROUP PLAYERS  
Directed by Paul Shyre

Thursday evening  
6:15 to 7:30 o'clock

November 12, 1959

Cast

WILL GEER \* PEGGY WOOD \* SADA THOMPSON \* FREDERICK ROLF

Early American Poetry

William Cullen Bryant, Oliver Wendell Holmes,  
Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edgar Allen Poe, Emily Dickinson  
Walt Whitman, and others.

\*\*\*\*\*

Next Week's Reading: The poetry of William Butler Yeats  
Thursday evening, November 19  
6:15 to 7:30 o'clock  
Cast to be announced

\*\*\*\*\*

THE POETRY CENTER  
presents  
THE POETRY GROUP PLAYERS  
Paul Shyre, Director  
Thursday Evening, December 3, 1959  
at 6:15 to 7:30 o'clock

\*\*\*\*\*

From Left To Right  
DAVID HURST JERRY JEDD PATRICIA FALKENHAIN EDWIN SHERIN  
Reading from the poetry of  
HART CRANE

\*\*\*\*\*

There will be a five minute intermission

\*\*\*\*\*

Next Program: The Poetry of Rudyard Kipling  
Thursday Evening, December 10, 1959  
6:15 to 7:30 o'clock

\*\*\*\*\*

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The Poetry Group Players

Thursday Evening, December 10, 6:15 o'clock

Paul Shyre, Director

presents

THE POETRY OF RUDYARD KIPLING

From left to right, readers are

MILDRED DUNNOCK LAWRENCE HUGO SADA THOMPSON WILLIAM WINDOM

\*\*\*\*\*

There will be a five minute intermission

Next Program:

THE POETRY OF DYLAN THOMAS

Thursday evening, December 17 at 6:15

The Poetry Group Players

Thursday Evening, December 17, 6:15 o'clock

Paul Shyre, Director

THE POETRY OF DYLAN THOMAS

Readers, from left to right, are

Tom Clancy    Ann Revere    Pauline Flannagan    James Kenny

\* \* \* \* \*

There will be a five minute intermission

Next Program: The Poetry of Thomas Wolfe  
Thursday Evening, January 7, 1960

The Poetry Group Players

Thursday Evening, January 14, 6:15 o'Clock

Paul Shyre, Director

THE WORKS OF THOMAS WOLFE

Readers, from left to right, are

Jason Roberts, Jr.    Kim Hunter    William Redfield

\* \* \* \* \*

There will be a five minute intermission

Next Program:    The Poetry of D.H. Lawrence  
                  Thursday Evening: January 28, 1960  
                  6:15 - 7:30



## WHAT THE POET NEEDS FROM SOCIETY

1) Enough recognition so that he can feel some human dignity and pride in his profession; not so much that he gets smug and self-righteous. In a healthy society, a critic or "non-creative" intellectual / perhaps "non-artistic" would be a better term/ also has this dignity and position. Right now, I believe a decadent situation exists wherein a kind of brain washing has fostered a notion that to be any kind of artist, even a bad or mediocre one, is better than to be an excellent critic or appreciator. Very unhealthy balance, which to me indicates a dangerous anti-intellectual trend that will eventually do more harm to the serious and good artist than make Everyman into a "fulfilled" person.

2) Enough money so that he can believe that every man has a right to comfort and a certain measure of pleasure. The artist is the man who tries to make beauty, among other things. He should not be deprived of the physical beauty which he is so sensitive to. Of course, making the ugly into the beautiful is one of the tasks of the artist; but he should not have to be so surrounded by the ugly, inhumane, or brutal that his only art can be social criticism. Social criticism is only one aspect of art.

3) A strong and affluent education system, so that cultured and mentally disciplined young people are

constantly feeding into the new society. Good universities can also be a source of income for the artist when there is no more direct way to earn a living from his work.

In short, the poet doesn't need any more or less than any other intelligent and perceptive person in our society. But he does need a society. He does need freedom from working at jobs he hates; he does need a society that doesn't burn books; he does need an active self-sustaining system so that he will not become embroiled in political activism--a course that usually stops the production of any art other than social or political journalism (which is of course a possible kind of art, but with extreme limitations); he does need culture centers, such as museums, concert halls, theaters, and public gathering places for both dialogue and performance; he does need a book-buying public and enough publishing houses so that his work can be printed and circulated; he does need a good postal system so that he can send his work around and keep in touch with other stimulating people by mail; he does need a society with some ideals, so that he can feel he is a guardian and exponent of those ideals.

DIANE WAKOSKI

---

I can't talk for other poets, but I have needed in the past a great deal of attention (which I didn't

get). Oddly, now that I have gotten it I find it exhausts me, and I need to hide most of the time behind my P.O. Box address and my unlisted phone number. Luckily I have an apartment that seems remote from the world even though in the middle of the city.

I also need money. I've decided that money is the cleanest thing there is, especially compared to prestige, fame, power--ego needs. Poetry of course is a great ego trip, but once the ego is satisfied (mine perhaps is satisfied easily), money is a comfort. (Donations in all amounts gratefully accepted.)

And then the need for Someone, to make me feel I'm not a worthless pile of shit (my deepest conviction). Someone to give to, cook for, take care of, put into all the tremendous energy that the world doesn't seem to want. I guess I'm waiting for some government (the celestial government?) to say, Come help us rule, make peace, save mankind. God, if I only knew how. I tell myself, work on yourself first--that is The Work.

P.S. I do not need any more beating up, kicks in the pants, contempt and putdowns. I've had enough of being victim. Just love me, people.

EDWARD FIELD

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## THE POET'S NEEDS AND SOCIETY

"O rose, thou art sick!" wrote Blake at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, and poets ever since have been examining the pathology of our society. The Industrial Revolution threatened people by proposing to turn them into wage-slaves, which indeed it did. It threatened the natural universe--that fountain of images--by polluting the landscape, by destroying "Eden." Into the gardens of the West crept Satan, in the form of the wily entrepreneur. This is what the romantic poets, at the dawn of the 19th century in England, were trying to say, with varying degrees of awareness of what it was that alarmed them.

The poet knows that his roots, the roots of being, strike far into the biosphere; that the entire living creation is sacred to him; that whatever cuts him off from his source withers him; that whoever despoils, defoliates, hates, kills, is his enemy. In Blake's searing words:

Each outcry of the hunted hare  
A fibre from the brain does tear.

The prime offense of Christianity against nature is that it has concerned itself only with the salvation of man, at the expense of other creatures. Even if the Church in practice did not relegate some bipeds to a place among the lesser breeds, its restrictive charity would be a prescription for annihilation. The frontier where man

must defend his life, the principle of life itself, is at the very edge of creation, where existence and non-existence are scarcely distinguishable, where we confront the anonymous and minimal, among the plankton and protozoa. Man will perish unless he learns that all of creation is one continuous web. Touch it at any point and the vast web trembles.

STANLEY KUNITZ

This article appeared in The New York Quarterly, May, 1970.

THE THEATRE GUILD, INC./HOLLAND AMERICA CRUISES  
present



# THEATRE AT SEA

SS ROTTERDAM

FROM NEW YORK ..... APRIL 17, 1975  
FROM FT. LAUDERDALE .. APRIL 19, 1975

Captain: A. H. LAGAAY

Hotel Manager: W. DIRKSEN Cruise Director: SEAN MEANEY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30 at 10.00 p.m.

Cyril Ritchard

Tammy Grimes      Lynn Redgrave  
Larry Kert          George Rose  
Mildred Natwick    Dick Shawn

AND YOUR HOSTS

Paul Shyre      Christopher Hewett

IN

## "CONVERSATION PIECES"

ARRANGED BY MR. HEWETT

CONVERSATIONS FROM THE WORKS OF  
THE FOLLOWING AUTHORS:

William Shakespeare

Oliver Goldsmith

Richard Brinsley Sheridan

George Bernard Shaw

Sean O'Casey

George S. Kaufman

Robert Sherwood

Walter de la Mare

William Somerset Maugham

Mary Chase

Dorothy Parker

The Theatre Guild gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following  
passengers: Everett Baker, Lola Frantz, Helen Harwood, Alex Lopez,  
Bruce Quinn, Jean White, Nancy White and Walter White.

Conductor	Scenery by	Assistant Conductor
JOHN LESKO	BOB ROGERS	WOODY KESSLER
Stage Manager	Clarinetist	Assistant Stage Manager
FRANK BIRT	ROMEO PENQUE	DANA GODFREY
Producer	Associate Producer	
MARILYN C. LANGNER	MERLE D. KING	
Stage Managers: Clint Jakeman & James Frasher		

APPENDIX P  
INVENTORY OF THE PAUL SHYRE COLLECTED PAPERS

Inventory of the Paul Shyre Collected Papers  
Mugar Memorial Library, Boston University  
Boston, Massachusetts

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations  
Used in Manuscript Inventories

autograph	in the person's own hand
holograph	same as autograph, in the person's own hand
holo. corr.	holograph corrections
ALS	autograph letter signed
ANS	autograph note signed
CTL	carbon typed letter
CTLS	carbon typed letter signed
TLS	typed letter signed
TNS	typed note signed
l.	leaf or leaves
n.d.	no date
p.	page or pages
[   ]	information in brackets has been supplied from some source other than the manuscript or letter itself.

Box #1

1. additions and corrections for possible production

Purple Dust    t.c.c. 6.



## 2. folder correspondence (arranged chronologically)

1954 - 1966

104 letters and 2 postcards

Priestley, J. B. 2 TLS 6 April 1954,

14 April 1954

O'Casey, Sean 3 ALS 5 Jan. 1956, 28 Dec.

1956, 5 Nov. 1958, 2 TLS 11 March 1957,

21 April 1958

Dos Passos, John 1 TLS 17 Feb. 1958

1 ALS postcard 4/9/59 3 ALS 31 Dec '58,

22 Dec '58, 9 Jan '59

Craig, Gordon 3 ALS 7/25/57; - ; 11/15/57;

1 ALS postcard

Fannan, Kathy 1 ALS 1 July 1959

O'Neill, Carlotta Monterey (Eugene's wife)

4 ALS 25 April 1960, 8 Aug. 1960, 24

April 1961, 15 May 1962, 1 TLS 21 April 1962

Egan, Jenny 2 TLS 29 June 1964, 16 Oct.

1964

Tolius, Rise (Mrs. Maxwell Shaw) TLS

1 July 1964

Lemay, Harding 2 TLS 9 Sept. 1964, 25

Nov. 1964

Pollock, Nancy R. 1 TLS 30 Oct. 1964,

1 ALS 17 Nov. 1964

Foch, Nina 1 ALS - 1964

Johnson, Edward P. 1 TLS 14 Jan 1964

Lagner, Philip 1 TLS 22 Jan 1965

Moses, Robert 1 TLS 16 Jan 1965

Astians, Ruth 1 TLS 27 Oct 1965

3. 110 fliers and playbills from various productions in which PS acted or for which he had adapted the screenplay and/or directed.

#### Box #2

folder of photographs: 11 photographs (glossy black and whites) of PS in various shows and 1 photograph (black and white) inscribed "For dear Paul, John Cramie"

news clippings (160) 1956-1966 about Paul Shyre

14 items of miscellaneous memorabilia including a certificate of appreciation from the Dutchess Community College dated 31 March 1966

Miroff, Philip "A Young Man With a Mission"

(re PS) in Cue 9 March 1951 p. 12

Lewis, Emory "The Theatre" review of play "Drums Under the Window" produced by PS in Cue Oct 22 1960 p. 13

#### Box #3 Addenda 1967

M.S. Plays -

1. THE CHILD BUYER by John Hersey. Adapted by Paul Shyre
  - a. typescript with holo. corr. and annotations, signed by Shyre. 152 pp.
  - b. Mimeo 97 pp.

2. THE CREDITORS A tragi-comedy by August Strindberg, adapted by Paul Shyre - 2 mimeo copies - 59 pp. each
3. DRUMS UNDER THE WINDOW by Sean O'Casey, adapted by Paul Shyre.
  - a. Mimeo with holo. corr. and annotations, signed by Shyre 77 pp.
  - b. Holo. notes, 5 pp.
  - c. Cast locator, typescript with holo. additions signed by Shyre 1 p.
  - d. Stage plan. Dated 9/19/60 - signed by Shyre 1 p.
  - e. Mimeo m.s. (rehearsal copy) with holo. corr. and annotations 77 pp.
4. I KNOCK AT THE DOOR - Swift glances back at things that made me. By Sean O'Casey adapted by Paul Shyre.
  - a. Lighting directions - typescript with holo. annotations. 9 pp.
  - b. Carbon typescript with profuse holo. corr. & annotations. 101 pp.
  - c. Stage plan - carbon holo. 1 p.
  - d. Light cues - dated Sept 23, 1967 - typescript with holo. additions. 6 pp.
  - e. Holo notes 2 pp.
5. PICTURES IN THE HALLWAY by Sean O'Casey. A dramatic narrative - adapted by Paul Shyre.

- a. Typescript with holo. corr. and annotations  
signed by P Shyre 98 pp.

Box #4

- 6. SOCIETY by Paul Shyre. A musical play from a  
novel by William Dean Howells.
  - a. Typescript with holo. corr. Signed by Shyre.  
102 pp.
- 7. TROUBLE IN OLD BAILEY. A television play by  
Paul Shyre.
  - a. Typescript signed by Shyre. 24 pp.
- 8. U.S.A. by John Dos Passos, adapted by Paul Shyre.
  - a. Mimeo with profuse holo. corr. and annota-  
tions signed by Shyre. 365 pp.
- 9. A WHITMAN PORTRAIT by Paul Shyre.
  - a. Mimeo with holo. corr. and annotations,  
signed by Shyre. 86 pp.
- 10. YEATS AND COMPANY - adapted by Paul Shyre.
  - a. Mimeo with holo. corr. signed by Shyre.  
76 pp.
  - b. Holo. notes. 5 pp.

Box #5

FOLDER #1

- 11. Correspondence July 10, 1957 - November 21,  
1966
  - a. 9 ALS
  - b. 28 TLS
  - c. 1 AL

- d. 3 TL
- e. 1 carbon
- f. 17 telegrams

Including:

- 1. Craig, Edward Gordon - ALS (postcard)  
Oct. 7, 1957; ALS (postcard) Aug. 10, 1957;  
ALS March 20, 1958; ALS April 28, 1960
- 2. Nathan, Julie Haydon (actress) - ALS  
Sept. 22, 1961 Catas Haydon, Julie
- 3. Graham, Irvin - ALS July 14, 1966;  
telegram - Oct. 11, 1966
- 4. Feinberg, Charles - TLS, July 24, 1966;  
TLS Aug. 10, 1966; TLS Aug. 23, 1966; TLS  
Sept. 19, 1966; Telegram Oct. 11, 1966; TLS  
Oct. 30, 1966; TLS Nov. 2, 1966; TLS Nov. 11,  
1966; TLS Sept. 30, 1966
- 5. Merrill, Dina TLS Sept. 30, 1966
- 6. Gotlieb, Howard B. TLS, Oct. 4, 1966;  
Oct. 27, 1966
- 7. Basler, Roy TLS Oct. 7, 1966
- 8. Atkinson, Brooks TLS Oct. 19, 1966
- 9. Rockefeller, Nelson TLS Nov. 2, 1966

FOLDER #2

12. Eugene O'Neill Material

- a. HUGHIE by Eugene O'Neill - galley proof  
signed by Carlotta Monterey O'Neill.

b. THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF SILVERDANE  
EMBLEM O'NEILL by Eugene O'Neill - signed  
by Carlotta Monterey O'Neill.

c. Picture of O'Neill with dog "Blemie"  
annotated on back by C. Monterey O'Neill.

13. Photograph album

a. Pictures of Shyre

FOLDER #3

14. Pictures of Sean O'Casey.

FOLDER #4

15. Snapshots from plays and 3 snapshots of Shyre  
and Jackie Cooper.

16. Two photo blowups

17. Box of theatre programs

18. 5 theatre posters

a. Sean O'Casey's PICTURES IN THE HALLWAY

b. Prose Poetry and Plays of W. B. Yeats

c. Paul Shyre's A WHITMAN PORTRAIT

d. Sean O'Casey's DRUMS UNDER THE WINDOW

e. Eugene O'Neill's DIFF'RENT.

FOLDER #5

19. Newsclippings and xerox of newspaper articles

Envelope:

20. Receipts and memoirs of 1957 European trip.

21. Printed material

a. I REMEMBER WHEN by Maurice Kieeger Sept. -  
Oct. 1955 (poetry)

- b. BIG JOES HAPPINESS MAGAZINE Oct. 1, 1958
- c. THE SHORT THING August 12, 1949 pg. 10
- d. Program of half-century banquet - The  
American Jewish Committee.

Box #5 Addenda August 1968

Folder #1

PS's adaptation of Sean O'Casey's "Pictures in the Hallway" 2 copies each 111 pp. with holo graph corrections. Typescript

Folder #2

"My Mister Lincoln" 12 pp. typescript carbon

Box #4

PS's adaptation for stage of Dos Passos' USA typescript carbon 107 pp.

Folder #4

A new play on the Chekovian theme by PS 1966 typescript carbon, 81 pp.

Folder #3

Correspondence 1953-68 57 TLS, 10 ALS and 2 TL (cc) to PS; 2 TL (cc) from PS.

Dos Passos, John TLS May 27, 1953

O'Hara, John to "Miss Klausner" TLS Oct. 11  
1953

Hersey, John TL (cc) to Peter Katz re: "Child Buyer" March 26, 1952

Baldrige, Letitia (Soc. Sec. to White House)

TLS July 31, 1962 (relative to Mrs. Eugene

O'Neill and the J. F. Kennedy, Nobel dinner)  
 Hersey, John ALS Nov. 4, 1963  
 Williams, Emlyn ALS Sept. 30, 1963; Sept. 28,  
 1963; Oct. 10, 1963; Oct. 22, 1963; Sept.  
 26, 1968; Oct. 3, 1966; Dec. 12, 1963; TLS  
 Oct. 5, 1953; Nov. 1, 1963; Sept. 15, 1963  
 O'Neill, Carlotta TLS Oct. 20, 1962  
 Sachar, A. L. TLS March 17, 1967  
 Stone, Harold TLS March 31, 1967  
 Clurman, Harold TLS Dec. 18, 1967  
 Udall, Stewart L. TL (cc) Feb. 7, 1968  
 Stein, Aline MacMahon TLS Jan. 13, 1968  
 Catos MacMahon, Aline  
 Albright, Archie TLS Feb. 20, 1968  
 Kimelman, Henry L. TLS April 26, 1968  
 Udall, Stewart ALS April 22, 1968

Folder #6

Eugene O'Neill's passport - gift from Carlotta  
 O'Neill 1928-1929.  
 Containing O'Neill's signature, photograph  
 personal information.

Box #5

Folder #7

Eugene O'Neill's briefcase given to Paul Shyre  
 by Carlotta O'Neill. (In stacks, box 7)

Box #6

Folder #8



- Photographs
- a) 6 glossy prints, black and white. PS and persons from theatre companies.
  - b) 1 glossy print, black and white scene from USA, adapted by PS, Aug. 9, 1953, production in Westport.
  - c) 2 glossy prints, black and white, from "The Child Buyer," 1965.
  - d) 2 glossy prints, black and white. Swarthmore College production of "I Knock At The Door."
  - e) 9 photos, black and white, from 2nd revival of "Pictures in the Hallway," 1964.

Box #5Folder #5

97 newsclippings re PS's plays, 1956-1968.

Box #6 + Box #7Folder #10

Playbills and Memorabilia. 79 items.

Incl: Brochure from Lincoln Fete at Reopening of the Ford Theatre in Washington.

Signed by Hubert Humphrey and Stewart Udall.

Box #8Folder #11

O'Neill, Carlotta Monterey ALS to Paul Shyre,  
 Jan. 28, 1962, regarding briefcase (Folder  
 #7)

PACKAGE: O'NEILL'S BRIEFCASE

Box #9 Addenda: January 1971Manuscripts

## A) Plays

- 1) "I Hear America Singing." Adapted by  
 PS in part from a film script by Joe  
 Wershba, March 1957.  
 Mimeo, 16 pp. with holograph note on  
 title page listing actors. (#1).
- 2) "Inaugural Program." Ford's Theatre,  
 Washington, D.C. (#2).
  - a) Draft, November 20, 1967. Mimeo,  
 33 pp.
  - b) Draft, November 1967. Typescript  
 with holograph corrections, 15 pp.
  - c) January 30, 1968. Typescript photo-  
 copy with holograph corrections,  
 36 pp.
- 3) "The New Tenants," 1970.  
 Typescript with holograph corrections,  
 44 pp. (#3).
- 4) "The President is Dead." 1968.

Typescript with holograph corrections,  
101 pp. (#4)

5) "U.S.A." Adapted by PS from the novel  
by John Dos Passos.

a) Carbon typescript with holograph  
corrections, 69 pp. (#5).

b) Typescript with holograph correc-  
tions, 68 pp. (#6).

c) Carbon typescript with holograph  
corrections, 79 pp. (#7).

d) Carbon typescript with holograph  
corrections, 68 pp. (#8)

e) Carbon typescript with holograph  
corrections, 80 pp. (#9).

6) "Will Rogers' Bandwagon." 1969.

a) Mimeo with holograph corrections,  
60 pp. (#10).

b) Act II. Mimeo, 27 pp. (#11).

c) Rehearsal Schedule. Typescript  
photocopy with holograph nota-  
tions, 1 p. (#11).

d) Company roster. Typescript photo-  
copy with holograph corrections,  
1 p. (#11).

B. Lecture.

"The Challenge of Developing a Creative  
Theatre in America." University of

Wisconsin at Madison, July 1963. Typescript with holograph corrections, 8 pp. (#12).

Box #10

Correspondence

A) O'Casey, Sean, 1954-1962. Most letters have extensive holograph additions by O'Casey. (#1).

13 TLS to PS

23 ALS

Also:

O'Casey, Sean. TLS signed by wife  
Eileen, December 10, 1960.

O'Casey, Sean. TLS photocopy to Franklin  
Murphy (Chancellor, University of  
California), October 12, 1960.

Manuscript. "A few changes in Drums of  
Father Ned." Typescript, 2 pp., with  
ALS on verso of page 2, O'Casey to  
PS, May 24, 1958.

O'Casey, Sean. Mimeo letter to "dear  
friend," March 6, 1962. Requests  
recipient to assist Davis Krause  
with publication of O'Casey letters.

Krause, David (Brown University). 2 TLS  
to PS, May 3 and June 22, 1962.

Kerz, Leo. TL copy to Sean O'Casey,  
June 27, 1957.

- B) O'Casey, Eileen (Wife of Sean O'Casey),  
1957-1960. (#2).

12 ALS

1 Greeting card.

- C) O'Casey, Shivaun (Daughter of Sean O'Casey).  
(#3).

2 ALS, November 25(?), 1957 and May 27,  
1958.

- D) Dos Passos, John, 1953-1960. (#4)

5 TLS

2 ALS

- E) General, 1956-1970. (#5).

44 TLS

4 ALS

17 Telegrams

3 TLS photocopies (not to PS)

3 TL (1 is to PS)

1 CTL

1 ANS (PS to himself).

Including:

Abram Morris B. (President of Brandeis  
University). TLS, April 2, 1969.

Clurman, Harold (Theatre director). TLS,  
December 19, 1970.

Mencken, August (Engineer, Author,  
Brother of H. L. Mencken). 2 TLS,  
February 27 and March 4, 1961.

Sachar, Abram L. (President of Brandeis University). TLS, February 16, 1962.

Schottland, Charles I. (President of Brandeis University) 2 TLS, November 18 and December 21, 1970.

Williams, Emlyn. 2 ALS, November 10 and December 29, 1970 with page 2, copy of ALS.

Printed Material

A) Productions by PS, Reviews, publicity, playbills, etc.

- 1) Sean O'Casey. "Pictures in the Hallway," "The Silver Tassie," "Purple Dust" and others, Ca. 50 pieces. (#6)

Box #11

- 2) "The Child Buyer" by John Hersey. 7 pieces. (#1)
- 3) "Creditors" by August Strindberg. 3 pieces. (#2).
- 4) "Diff'rent" by Eugene O'Neill. Ca. 25 pieces. (#3)
- 5) "The Drinking Party" by Paul Shyre, based on Plato's "Symposium." 4 pieces. (#4).
- 6) "Far Fetched Fables" by Bernard Shaw. 3 pieces. (#5).

- 7) "New York, New York." A celebration in prose and poetry. Adapted and directed by Paul Shyre. 3 pieces. (#6).
- 8) "The President is Dead" by Paul Shyre. 5 pieces. (#7).
- 9) "The Prose, Poetry, and Plays of William Butler Yeats." Adapted and directed by Paul Shyre. 10 pieces. (#8).
- 10) "The Theatre of Mr. Poe." Adapted and directed by Paul Shyre. 15 pieces. (#9).
- 11) "U.S.A." by John Dos Passos. Adapted by Paul Shyre. 25 pieces. (#10).
- 12) "A Whitman Portrait." Adapted and directed by Paul Shyre. Ca. 40 pieces. (#11).
- 13) "Will Rogers' U.S.A." Adapted and directed by Paul Shyre. Ca. 75 pieces. (#12).

#### Box #12

- 14) Miscellaneous productions. 13 pieces. (#1).

B) News articles and publicity re: PS. 1961-1969. 9 pieces. (#2).

#### Photographs

- 1) Eugene O'Neill with wife Carlotta and friends. Ca. 1933-1941. 13 photographs. (#3)

- 2) "U.S.A." production. 5 photographs.  
(#4).
- 3) "A Whitman Portrait" production, 1967.  
13 contact sheets. (#5).

Sean O'Casey Manuscripts (#6)

- 1) "The Ruined Rowan Tree." Words and  
music by Sean O'Casey. Holograph,  
1 p.; with words only on verso.
- 2) "The Ruined Rowan Tree." Tearsheet  
with linocut by Shivaun O'Casey.
- 3) "The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe" by Sean  
O'Casey. Play. Carbon typescript,  
7 pp. Incomplete.

Contracts and Documents (#7)

- 1) "Creditors" by August Strindberg.  
Adaptation copyright by PS, 1962.
- 2) "Pictures In the Hallway" by Sean  
O'Casey. Production agreement, 1956.
- 3) "Juno and the Paycock" by Sean O'Casey.  
Contract, 1960.
- 4) "U.S.A." Agreement to print the drama-  
tization in Theatre Arts Magazine, 1960.  
With signatures of John Dos Passos and  
Paul Shyre.

Miscellaneous (#8)

- 1) National Liberal Club. Temporary mem-  
bership card for PS, August 12-14,



1963. London.

- 2) Announcement of production of Maxwell Anderson's "Joan of Lorraine" at Lenox Hill Playhouse. With signatures of PS and others.
- 3) Performance schedule of "Will Rogers' U.S.A." Holograph photocopy with holograph changes, 6 pp. August-December 1970.

Box #12 Addenda: January 1978

I. MANUSCRIPTS

A. By PS

1. "The Lerner & Loewe Notebook. A Treatment for Television." Typescript with holo. corr., 8 p. (#9)

B. By Others

1. John Dos Passos. Revision of U.S.A., made on copies of page proofs. Holograph, 3 p. on 2 leaves. (#11)
2. Tennessee Williams. Notes on "Small Craft Warnings." Holograph, 1 p., dated Aug. 1972, with separate holo. note of identification by PS. (#12)

II. PHOTOGRAPHS (#13)

Black and white unless indicated otherwise.

- A. "Absurd Person Singular." 3 8"x10", 2 of PS, one of PS and Carol Lynley, dated 1975.

- B. "California Suite." 1 8"x10" of PS and Lynne Redgrave, dated 1977.
- C. "Blasts and Bravos." 2 8"x10" of PS, dated 1975.
- D. "The President Is Dead." 6 8"x10" of PS and banner ad (3 of same pose) and 14 5"x7" in color of scenes from the show.
- E. 1 2"x 3½" photo of PS as a child in swimming trunks with trombone, dated 1938.

### III. PRINTED ITEMS

#### A. By PS (#14)

- 1. "Mencken on Stage." Menckeniana, Winter 1975, No. 65, p. 4.
- 2. "Talk with Two Titans." Record of talks with Sean O'Casey and Gordon Craig. Newspaper clip from New York Times, n.d.

#### B. About PS

Reviews, publicity, programs, and ticket stubs from shows PS acted in, directed, or staged. Listed by show title, with some containing material from a variety of different productions.

- 1. "Absurd Person Singular." 24 pieces from 1975-1976. Env. (#1)
- 2. "California Suite." 17 pieces from 1977. Env. (#2)

3. "The Child Buyer" and "Creditors."  
58 pieces from 1962-1968. Env. (#3)
4. "Diff'rent" and "The Long Voyage Home."  
36 pieces from 1961. Env. (#4)
5. "Drums Under the Windows." 91 pieces  
from 1960-1961. Env. (#5)

Box #13

6. Re: H. L. Mencken
  - a. "Blasts and Bravos - An Evening  
with H. L. Mencken." 42 pieces  
from 1975. Env. (#1)
  - b. "An Unpleasant Evening with H. L.  
Mencken." 62 pieces from 1971-1972.  
Env. (#2)
7. "I Knock at the Door." 10 pieces from  
1956-1973. Env. (#3)
8. "Pictures in the Hallway." 72 pieces  
from 1956-1974. Env. (#4)
9. "The President Is Dead." 20 pieces  
from 1971. Env. (#5)
10. "Purple Dust." 21 pieces from 1956-  
1957. Env. (#6)
11. "Saint Joan." 16 pieces from 1977-  
1978. Env. (#7)
12. "U.S.A." 63 pieces from 1953-1976.  
Env. (#8)

Box #14

- 13. "Will Rogers' U.S.A." 68 pieces from  
1971-1977. Env. (#1)
- 14. Various other plays.
  - a. Acted by PS. 17 pieces from 1946-  
1958. Env. (#2)
  - b. Adapted or staged by PS. 10 pieces  
from 1962-1967. Env. (#3)
  - c. Directed by PS. 44 pieces from  
1951-1976. Env. (#4)

- Package 2
- 15. Publicity posters
    - a. "Absurd Person Singular." 14"x22".
    - b. "Blasts and Bravos: an Evening with  
H. L. Mencken." 14"x22".
    - c. "The Morgan Yard." 12"x20 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".
    - d. "Will Rogers' U.S.A." 14"x22".

## IV. CONTRACTS

4 contracts for theatrical productions. Dated  
1956 to 1974. (#1)

## V. CORRESPONDENCE (#2)

Professional and personal corr. from July 25,  
1946 - May 5, 1977. 52 pieces.

## Includes:

Crawford, Cheryl, ALS with envelope post-  
marked May 5, 1977.

Gifford, Ed, 5 memos, 1975.

Harriss, R. P. (The News American), TLS,  
March 10, 1972; post card, March 27,  
1972.

Irving, Jules, ALS, n.d.

Macnee, Patrick, ALS, n.d.

Marx, Joseph L. (West Park Publishing  
Corp.), TLS, Nov. 3, 1961.

O'Hara, John, TLS, Nov. 17, 1961.

Vallée, Rudy, TLS, Jan. 21, n.y.

#### VI. MISCELLANEOUS

- A. PS's U.S. passport, with visas from 1966-  
1970. (#3)
- B. Ground plan and prop list from "An Evening  
with H. L. Mencken." (#4)

Box #14 Addenda: June 1980

#### I. MANUSCRIPTS

##### A. Plays by PS

- 1. "Ah, Men." Mimeographed typescript,  
signed, dated 1980, 32 p. and title p.  
and cover. (#5)
- 2. "Divine Rights." Photocopy of type-  
script with holo. corr., 67 p. and  
2 prelim. p. (#6)
- 3. "Paris Was Yesterday." Adapted by PS  
from the New Yorker articles by Janet  
Flanner. Photocopy of typescript with  
holo. corr., 66 p. (#7)

B. Interview Transcript

With Janet Flanner by PS, New York City,  
1976. Photocopy of typescript with a few  
holo. corr., 74 p. (#8)

II. PHOTOGRAPHS

All black and white.

A. Gordon Craig. Taken in Tourrette Sur Loup,  
France, summer 1957. 14 photos:

10  $3\frac{1}{4}$ " x  $4\frac{1}{2}$ "

3  $2\frac{3}{4}$ " x 4"

1  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5", signed. (envelope #5)

B. Janet Flanner. 2 photos, both 5" x 9"

by Suzanne Karp Krebs (envelope #6)

1. Janet Flanner & Celeste Holm. Taken  
at the Geo. St. Playhouse, New Bruns-  
wick, N. J. March 12, 1978.

2. Celeste Holm at the typewriter por-  
traying JF.

C. Sean O'Casey. Taken in Devon, England.

1. June 1957. (envelope #7)

a. 5  $3\frac{1}{4}$ " x  $5\frac{1}{4}$ ", 3 with PS, 1 with his  
wife.

b. Negatives, 36 exposures.

2. June 1960. 51  $2\frac{7}{8}$ " x  $4\frac{1}{8}$ " (env. #8)

a. 31 of Sean O'Casey alone.

b. 1 of O'Casey and another man.

c. 19: some of Sean O'Casey and wife;

some of wife alone; and some of  
O'Casey and PS.

- d. 14 others. (envelope #9)
  - i) 5 of Sean O'Casey, approx.  
3½" x 4¼".
  - ii) 2 of O'Casey with PS,  
3 3/8" x 4 7/8".
  - iii) The rest of wife and children,  
friends, and others. Most  
3 3/8" x 4 7/8".
  - iv) 1 of O'Casey and another man.

Box #15

III. PRINTED ITEMS

A. About PS

- 1. Reviews, publicity and programs from  
shows PS directed, produced, or acted in.
  - a. "Blasts and Bravos." 5 pieces from  
1975 to 1979. (#1)
  - b. "California Suite." 5 pieces from  
1977. (#2)
  - c. "Juno and the Paycock." 2 pieces  
from 1973. (#3)
  - d. "The Misanthrope." 4 pieces from  
1980. (#4)
  - e. "Paris Was Yesterday." 26 pieces  
from 1979-1980. (#5)

- f. "Saint Joan." 4 pieces from 1977-1978. (#6)
- g. "Side by Side." 21 pieces from 1978-1979.
- h. Other plays. 7 pieces from 1969-1976. (#8)
- 2. Articles concerning PS  
2 pieces from 1980. (#9)
- 3. Other printed items. (#10)
  - a. Playbill from "Clothes for a Summer Hotel," cover signed by Tennessee Williams and Geraldine Page.
  - b. "Thirty Years of the White Barn Theatre." Commemorative brochure.
  - c. "Truly Yours." Booklet commemorating 150 years of Samuel French, Inc.
  - d. Printed caricature by Norkin of performers aboard the Queen Elizabeth II, including PS.

#### IV. TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

Copies of two ground plans of the set of "Paris Was Yesterday." (#11)

#### V. CORRESPONDENCE

Professional and personal corr. from Sept. 30, 1958 - May 22, 1980. 17 pieces. Includes:

Crawford, Cheryl, ALS, Nov. 9, 1979.

Donleavy, J. P., TLS, Jan. 25, 1962.



Dos Passos, John, ALS, April 27, 1981.

Loos, Anita, 2 ALS, Jan. 12, Jan 23, 1975.

O'Casey, Sean, telegram from S'OC, wife and  
children. Sept. 30, 1958.

Wallach, Eli, TLS, Jan. 15, 1972.

Williams, Emlyn, ALS, Dec. 19, 1962.

VI. IDENTIFICATION (envelope #1

A. Passport with stamped visas from 1971-1974.

B. Cornell University identification cards,  
2 pieces.

## VITA

James Glen Beggs was born March 31, 1945, in Upland, California. He graduated from Davis County High School, Bloomfield, Iowa in 1963 and took a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music at Baptist Bible College, Springfield, Missouri in 1975. He received his Master of Arts degree from Southwest Missouri State University in 1978, specializing in rhetoric and public address with a minor in oral interpretation. He has been enrolled at Louisiana State University since 1979.

Presently, Mr. Beggs is professor of speech communication at Baptist Bible College and also serves as a member of the adjunct faculty at Drury College in the same city.

# EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: James Glen Beggs

Major Field: Speech

Title of Thesis: Paul Shyre's Contribution to the Professional Performance of Non-Dramatic Literature 1954-1981: An Historical Survey

Approved:

Mary Frances Hopkins  
Major Professor and Chairman

William Coyer  
Dean of the Graduate School

## EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Francine Merritt

Huld Mays

John H. Demytchuk  
Robert Fendler

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Date of Examination:

November 29, 1982